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ART. XIII.—*Progress of the Vedic Religion towards Abstract Conceptions of the Deity.*¹ By J. MUIR, Esq.

[Read November 21, 1864].

IN a passage which I have already quoted in my former paper on the Vedic mythology (p. 59) Yâska, the author of the Nirukta, informs us (vii. 5) that previous writers of the school to which he himself belonged (the Nairuktas) reduced the deities mentioned in the Vedas to three—viz., “Agni, whose place is on the earth, Vâyu or Indra, whose place is in the air, and Sûrya, whose place is in the sky;” and asserted that “these deities had severally received many appellations in consequence of their greatness, or of the diversity of their functions, as the names of *hotṛ*, *adhvaryu*, *brahman*, and *udgâṭṛ*, are applied to one and the same person [according to the particular sacrificial office which he happens to be fulfilling].” In the preceding section (vii. 4) Yâska goes still further and declares that “owing to the greatness of the deity, the one Soul is celebrated as if it were many. The different gods are separate members of the one Soul.”² These, however, are the views of men who lived after the compilation of the Brâhmanas, at a period when reflection had long been exercised upon the contents of the hymns, and when speculation had already made considerable advances. In the oldest portions of the hymns themselves we discover few traces of any such abstract conceptions of the Deity. They disclose a much more primitive stage of religious belief. They are, as I have already attempted to show, the productions of simple men who, under the influence of the most impressive phenomena of nature, saw everywhere the presence and agency of divine powers, who

¹ In various parts of the translations occurring in this paper I have received valuable assistance from Professor Aufrecht.

² This passage is quoted at length in Sanskrit Texts, iv. 131–136.

imagined that each of the great provinces of the universe was directed and animated by its own separate deity, and who had not yet risen to a clear idea of one supreme creator and governor of all things (pp. 52-54). This is shown not only by the special functions assigned to particular gods, but in many cases by the very names which they bear, corresponding to those of some of the elements or of the celestial luminaries. Thus, according to the belief of the ancient rishis, Agni was the divine being who resides and operates in fire, Sûrya the god who dwells and shines in the sun, and Indra the regent of the atmosphere who cleaves the clouds with his thunderbolts and dispenses rain. While, however, in most parts of the Rig Veda, such gods as Agni, Indra, and Sûrya are not merely considered as distinct from one another, but are multiplied into a variety of separate divinities (as Jâtavedas, Parjanya, Vishṇu, Savitr, etc.) there are other hymns in which a tendency to identification is perceptible and traces are found of one uniform power being conceived to underlie the various manifestations of divine energy. Thus in the texts quoted in my former essay (pp. 127 f.) Agni is represented as having a threefold existence; first, in his familiar form on earth; secondly, as lightning in the atmosphere; and thirdly, as the sun in the heavens. In other passages where the same god is identified with Vishṇu, Varuṇa, Mitra, etc. (see p. 130), it is not clear whether this identification may not arise from a desire to magnify Agni rather than from any idea of his essential oneness with the other deities with whom he is connected (see also R. V. i. 141, 9; v. 3, 1; v. 13, 6). In another hymn, too, where Indra is represented as the same with Varuṇa (p. 104), the design of the writer may have been to place the former god on a footing of equality with the latter.

There are, however, other passages in the earlier books of the Rig Veda which suffice to show that the writers had begun to regard the principal divinities as something more than mere representatives or regents of the different provinces of nature. As I have already shown (pp. 80, 97 f., 115, 117, 128) Indra, Varuṇa, Sûrya, Savitr, and Agni are severally described (in strains

more suitable to the supreme Deity than to subaltern divinities exercising a limited dominion) as having formed and as sustaining heaven and earth, and as the rulers of the universe ;¹ and Varuṇa, in particular, according to the striking representation of the hymn preserved in the A. V. iv. 16 (though this composition may be of a somewhat later date), is invested with the divine prerogatives of omnipotence and omniscience. Although the recognized co-existence of all these deities is inconsistent with the supposition that their worshippers had attained to any clear comprehension of the unity of the god-head, and although the epithets denoting universal dominion which are lavished upon them all in turn may be sometimes hyperbolical or complimentary,—the expressions of momentary fervour,—or designed to magnify a particular deity at the expense of all other rival objects of adoration, yet these descriptions no doubt indicate enlarged and sublime conceptions of divine power and an advance towards the idea of one sovereign deity. When once the notion of particular gods had become expanded in the manner just specified and had risen to an ascription of all divine attributes to the object of worship who was present for the time to the mind of the poet, the further step would speedily be taken of speaking of the deity under such new names as Viṣvakarman and Prajāpati, appellations which were not suggested by any limited function connected with any single department of nature, but by the more general and abstract notion of divine power operating in the production and government of the universe.

It is in names such as these that we discover the point of transition from polytheistic to monotheistic ideas. Both these two terms, which ultimately came to designate the deity regarded as the creator, had been originally used as epithets of Indra and Savitr, in the following passages :—R. V. iv. 53, 2, “Savitr, the supporter of the sky (and) of the world, the lord of creatures (*prajāpati*).”² viii. 87, 2. “Thou, Indra,

¹ The same functions are ascribed to Viṣṇu and to Rudra. See Sanskrit Texts, iv. pp. 84 and 328.

² So, too, Soma is called *prajāpati*, “lord of creatures” (R. V. ix. 5, 9).

art most powerful ; thou hast caused the sun to shine ; thou art great, the universal architect (*viṣvakarman*), and the god of all (*viṣvadeva*)."¹

I shall now adduce those passages of the Rig Veda in which a monotheistic or a pantheistic tendency is most clearly manifested. Of some of these texts I shall only state the substance, as I have formerly treated of them in detail elsewhere.

The following verse from a long hymn of an abstruse and mystical character (i. 164, 46), though considered by Yāska to have reference to Agni, and by Kātyāyana and Sāyaṇa (with perhaps more probability) to have Sūrya in view, may nevertheless be held to convey the more general idea that all the gods, though differently named and represented, are in reality one—πολλῶν ὀνομάτων μορφὴ μία : "They call him Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa, Agni ; and (he is) the celestial well-winged Garutmat. Sages name variously that which is but one : they call it Agni, Yama, Mātariṣvan."² (See Colebrooke's Ess. i. 26 f. ; Weber's Ind. Stud. v. p. iv).

R. V. i. 89, 10 (quoted in my former paper, p. 69), suggests, on the other hand, a pantheistic sense, as it asserts all things to be the manifestations of one all-pervading principle : "Aditi is the sky, Aditi is the air, Aditi is the mother and father and son. Aditi is all the gods and the five classes of men. Aditi is whatever has been born, Aditi is whatever shall be born."³ Reference will be made further on to the

¹ So, too, in R. V. x. 170, 4, Sūrya is called *viṣvakarman* and *viṣvadevyavat*.

² In the same way it is said, A. V. xiii. 3, 13 : "Agni becomes in the evening Varuṇa (the god of night), and Mitra, when rising in the morning. Becoming Savitr, he moves through the atmosphere, and becoming Indra, he burns along the middle of the sky." In xiii. 4, 1 ff., Savitr is identified with a great many other deities. The words *asya devasya . . . vyaśh īśishyoh*, in R. V. vii. 40, 6, are interpreted by Sāyaṇa to mean "[The other gods] are branches of this . . . god Vishṇu;" but the words between brackets are not in the original.

I observe that in his lectures on the "Science of Language," 2nd ser. p. 508, Prof. Müller understands the words with which all the verses of R. V. iii. 55, conclude (*mahad devānām asuratvam ekam*) to signify, "The great divinity of the gods is one," as if they asserted all the gods to be manifestations of one supreme deity. The clause, however, need not mean anything more than that the divine power of the gods is *unique*.

³ Compare Æschylus, fragment 443, translated by Prof. Müller, "Science of Language," ii. 441 : Ζεὺς ἐστιν αἰθερ, Ζεὺς δὲ γῆ, Ζεὺς δ' οὐρανός. Ζεὺς τοι τὰ πάντα χῶ τι τῶνδ' ὑπέρτερον. The Taittiriya Brāhmaṇa, iii. 12, 3, 1, says that the self-existent Brahma is "son, father and mother."

hymn in which Aditi is described as one of the great powers to which the creation is due.

In some of the representations of the character and functions of Tvashṭṛ, the divine artizan, who shaped the heaven and earth, we have an approach to the idea of a supreme creator of the universe (see my former paper, p. 132).

There is a considerable variety in the methods by which the later poets of the R. V. attempt to conceive and express the character of the Supreme Being and his relations to the universe, as will be seen from the following details:—

VIṢVAKARMAN.

The 81st and 82nd hymns of the tenth book of the Rig Veda,¹ are devoted to the celebration of Viṣvakarman, the great architect of the universe; so that the word which, as we have seen, had formerly been used as an epithet of Indra, had now become the name of a deity, if not of the Deity. In these hymns Viṣvakarman is represented as the one all-seeing god, who has on every side eyes, faces, arms, and feet, who, when producing heaven and earth, blows² them forth with his arms and wings,—as the father, generator, disposer, who knows all worlds, gives the gods their names, and is beyond the comprehension of mortals. In one of the verses (the 4th) of the first of these hymns, the poet asks: “What was the forest, what was the tree, out of which they fashioned heaven and earth? Enquire with your minds, ye sages, what was that on which he took his stand when supporting the world?” This verse is repeated in the Taittīriya Brâhmaṇa ii. 8, 9, 6 (and comes in immediately after the end of R. V. x. 129, which is quoted in the same place). The compiler of the Brâhmaṇa replies to the question which the original poet, either from accident or ignorance, had left unanswered, by saying: “Brahma was the forest, Brahma was that tree, out of which they fashioned heaven and earth. Sages, with my mind I declare to you, he took his stand upon Brahma when upholding the world.”

¹ See p. 58 of former paper, and Sanskrit Texts, iv. 4 ff.

² This image is repeated in R. V. x. 72, 2; and may have been borrowed from R. V. iv. 2, 17.

HIRAṆYAGARBHA.

Another name under which the deity is celebrated in the Rig Veda, with all the attributes of supremacy, is Hiraṇyagarbha. In the 121st hymn of the tenth book this god is said to have existed (or to have arisen, *samavarttata*) in the beginning, the one lord of all beings, who upholds heaven and earth, who gives life and breath, whose command even the gods obey, who is the god over all gods, and the one animating principle (*asu*) of their being." (See Sanskrit Texts iv. 13 ff).

BRAHMAṆASPATI, DAKSHA, AND ADITI.

There is another hymn (R. V. x. 72 ; already quoted in my former paper, p. 72) in which the creation of the gods is ascribed to Brahmanaspati,¹ who blew them forth like a blacksmith ;² while the earth is said to have sprung from a being called Uttānapad ; and Daksha and Aditi were produced from one another by mutual generation. The gods, though formed by Brahmanaspati, did not, it is said, come into existence till after Aditi, and appear to have had some share in the formation or development of the world.

This hymn is almost entirely of a mythological character, the only attempt at speculation it contains being the declaration that entity sprang from nonentity. The manner in which the author endeavours by the introduction of different names, and the ascription to them of various agencies, to explain the process of creation, forms a striking contrast to the sublime vagueness and sense of mystery which characterize the following composition (R. V. x. 129) :³

¹ Brahmanaspati is elsewhere (R. V. ii. 26, 3) styled "the father of the gods," while Brhaspati (a kindred, if not identical, deity) is called "our father" (R. V. vi. 73, 1). And yet Brahmanaspati is himself said in R. V. ii. 23, 17, to have been generated by Tvashṭr superior to all creatures. On the character of this god the reader may consult some ingenious remarks by Professor Roth in the first volume of the Journal of the German Oriental Society, pp. 72 ff., and Professor Wilson's notes to his translation of the Rig Veda, vol. i. pp. 41 and 43, and vol. ii. pp. 262 and 263. I may take an opportunity to give an account of this deity, as well as of several others, whom I have not yet handled, in a future paper.

² See above, p. 343.

³ This hymn has been already translated by Mr. Colebrooke and Professor Müller, as well as in Sanskrit Texts, iv. 4. I have now endeavoured to improve

NONENTITY, ENTITY, AND THE ONE.

"1. There was then neither nonentity nor entity : there was no atmosphere, nor sky above. What enveloped [all]? Where, in the receptacle of what, [was it contained]? Was it water, the profound abyss? 2. Death was not then, nor immortality : there was no distinction of day or night. That One¹ breathed calmly, self-supported : there was nothing different from, or above, it. 3. In the beginning darkness existed, enveloped in darkness. All this was undistinguishable water.² That One, which lay void, and wrapped in nothingness, was developed by the power of fervour (*tapas*). 4. Desire (*kāma*) first arose in It, which was the primal germ of mind ; [and which] sages, searching with their intellect, have discovered in their heart to be the bond which connects entity with nonentity. 5. The ray [or cord]³ which stretched across these [worlds], was it below or was it above ? There were there impregnating powers and mighty forces, a self-supporting principle beneath, and energy aloft.⁴ 6. Who

my own version, and otherwise to illustrate the sense of the hymn. I have attempted the following metrical rendering of its contents :—

"Then there was neither Aught nor Nought, no air nor sky beyond.
 What covered all ? Where rested all ? In watery gulf profound ?
 Nor death was there, nor deathlessness, nor change of night and day.
 That One breathed calmly, self-sustained ; nought else beyond It lay.
 Gloom hid in gloom existed first—one sea, eluding view.
 That One, a void in chaos wrapt, by inward fervour grew.
 Within It first arose desire, the primal germ of mind,
 Which nothing with existence links, as sages searching find.
 The cord, transversely stretched, that spanned this universal frame,
 Was it beneath ? was it above ? Can any sage proclaim ?
 There fecundating powers were found, and mighty forces strove,
 A self-supporting mass beneath, and energy above.
 Who knows, who ever told, from whence this vast creation rose ?
 No gods had then been born,—who then can e'er the truth disclose ?
 Whence sprang this world, and whether framed by hand divine or no,—
 It's lord in heaven alone can tell, if even he can show."

¹ Compare R. V. i. 164, 6, "What was that One in the form of the unborn which supported these six worlds ?"

² In the M. Bh. Śāntip. 6812 ff. it is said that from the æther was produced water, "like another darkness in darkness ;" and from the foam of the water was produced the wind.

³ Professor Aufrecht has suggested to me that the word *raśmi* may have here the sense of thread, or cord, and not of ray.

⁴ Does this receive any illustration from R. V. i. 169, 2 (quoted in the former paper on Vedic Mythology, p. 54), which speaks of the "thought (*manas*) of the father" (Dyaus), and of the "mighty independent power (*mahi svatavas*) of the mother" (Earth) ?

knows, who here can declare, whence has sprung, whence, this creation? The gods are subsequent to the formation of this [universe]; who then knows whence it arose? 7. From what this creation arose, and whether [any one] made it or not,—He who in the highest heaven is its ruler, he verily knows, or [even] he does not know.”

I am not in possession of Sāyana's commentary on this hymn; but the scholiast on the Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa, in which it is repeated (ii. 8, 9, 3 ff.), explains it in conformity with the philosophical ideas of a later period. From such sources we have no right in general to expect much light on the real meaning of the ancient Vedic poets. The commentator in question, who is obliged to find in the words of the infallible Veda a meaning consistent with the speculations believed to be orthodox in his own age, interprets the first verse as follows, in terms which, indeed, after all, may not be far from correctly expressing its general purport: “In the interval between the absorption of the previous, and the production of the subsequent, creation, there was neither entity nor nonentity. The world at the time when, by possessing both ‘name’ and ‘form’¹ it is clearly manifested, is designated by the word ‘entity,’ while a void which may be compared to such non-existing things as a ‘man's horns,’ etc., is called ‘nonentity.’ Neither of these states existed: but there was a certain unapparent condition, which from the absence of distinctness was not an ‘entity,’ while from its being the instrument of the world's production, it was not a ‘nonentity.’”

A much older commentary on this verse, probably one of the oldest extant, is the following passage from the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, x. 5, 3, 1: “In the beginning this [universe] was, as it were, nonentity. In the beginning this universe was, as it were, and was not, as it were. Then it was only that mind. Wherefore it has been declared by the rishi (in the

¹ These Vedāntic terms *name* and *form* occur (as observed in my paper on Yama) in the Atharva Veda, x. 2, 12: “Who placed in him (Purusha) name, magnitude, and form?” and in xi. 7, 1: “In the remains of the sacrifice (*uchhish(a)*) name and form, in the remains of the sacrifice the world, is comprehended.” See Ś. P. Br. xi. 2, 3, 1, to be quoted below.

verse before us), 'There was then neither nonentity, nor entity;' for mind was, as it were, neither entity nor non-entity. 2. Then this mind being created, wished to become manifested, more revealed, more embodied. It sought after itself; it performed rigorous abstraction. It swooned. It beheld 36,000 of its own fires," etc. Mind then creates voice, voice creates breath, breath creates eye, eye creates ear, ear creates action (or ceremony), and action creates fire.

These ideas of entity and nonentity seem to have been familiar to the Vedic poets, as in R. V. x. 72 (noticed above, and translated in my paper on the Vedic Theogony, p. 72), we find it thus declared (vv. 2, 3), that in the beginning non-entity was the source of entity: "In the earliest age of the gods entity sprang from nonentity; in the first age of the gods entity sprang from nonentity." In the Atharva Veda, x. 7, 10, it is said that both nonentity and entity¹ exist within the god Skambha; and in v. 25 of the same hymn; "powerful indeed are those gods who sprang from nonentity. Men say that that nonentity is one, the highest, member of Skambha."² The Taittiriya Upanishad also (p. 99) quotes a verse to the effect: "This was at first nonentity. From that sprang entity."

The author of the Chhândogya Upanishad probably alludes to some of these texts when he says (vi. 2, 1 f. Bibl. Ind. p. 387 f.):³ "This, O fair youth, was in the beginning existent (or entity) (*sat*), one without a second. Now some say, 'This was in the beginning non-existent (or non-entity) (*asat*), one without a second: wherefore the existent must spring from the non-existent.' 2. But how, O fair youth, he proceeded, can it be so? How can the existent spring

¹ Another verse of the A. V. xvii. 1, 19, says: "Entity is founded (*pratishthitam*) on nonentity; what has become (*bhûta*) is founded on entity. What has become is based (*âhitam*) on what is to be, and what is to be is founded on what has become."

² This phrase is also applied to Agni in R. V. x. 5, 7, where it is said that that god, being "a thing both *asat*, non-existent (*i.e.* unmanifested), and *sat*, existent (*i.e.* in a latent state, or in essence), in the highest heaven, in the creation of Daksha, and in the womb of Aditi (comp. R. V. x. 72, 4 f.), became in a former age the first-born of our ceremonial, and is both a bull and a cow." In A. V. xi. 7, 3, it is said that the *uchhishîtha* (remains of the sacrifice) is both *san* and *asan* (masculine).

³ See English trans. p. 101; which I have not followed.

from the non-existent? But, O fair youth, this was in the beginning existent, one without a second. That [entity] thought, 'Let me multiply and be produced.'"

There does not appear to be any discrepancy between the statement in R. V. x. 129, 1, "there was then neither nonentity nor entity," and the doctrine of the Chhândogya Upanishad, for in the second verse of the hymn, also, a being designated as the One is recognized as existing, which may be regarded as answering to the primal entity of the Upanishad; while the original non-existence of anything, whether nonentity or entity, asserted in the first verse, may merely signify, as the commentator on the Taittiriya Brâhmaṇa explains, that there was as yet no distinct manifestation of the One. In like manner the A. V. x. 7, 10, 25 (quoted above), does not assert the absolute priority of nonentity, but affirms it to be embraced in, or a member of, the divine being designated as Skambha. The Chhândogya Upanishad has, however, a greater appearance of being at variance with itself, iii. 19, 1 (*asad evedam agre âsit tat sad âsit*), and with the Taittiriya Upanishad, as well as with verses 2 and 3 of the 72nd hymn of the tenth book of the R. V., above cited, which assert that entity sprang from nonentity. If these verses are to be taken literally and absolutely, we must suppose the poet to have conceived the different creative agents whom he names Brahmanaspati, Uttânâpad, Daksha, and Aditi, to have sprung out of nothing, or from each other, or to be secondary manifestations of the entity which was the first product of nonentity. If, however, with the commentators, we take "non-entity" to denote merely an undeveloped state, there will be no contradiction.

The first movement in the process of creation as conceived in the hymn (R. V. x. 129) is this. The One, which in the beginning breathed calmly, self-sustained, is developed by the power of *tapas*, by its own inherent heat (as Prof. Müller explains, *Anc. Sansk. Lit.* p. 561), or by rigorous and intense abstraction (as Prof. Roth understands the word; see his *Lexicon*, s.v.)¹ This development gave occasion to desire (*Kâma*)

¹ Roth's interpretation is supported by a text in the A. V. x. 7, 38 (see further on)

which immediately took possession of the One, and is described as the first germ of mind, and the earliest link¹ between nonentity and entity. The poet then goes on to speak of impregnating powers, and mighty forces, of receptive capacities, and active energies; but confesses himself unable to declare how the universe was produced. The gods themselves having come into existence at a later stage of creation, were not in a position to reveal to their worshippers the

as well as by numerous passages in the Brāhmaṇas. Thus in S. P. Br. xi. 5, 8, 1 (quoted in Sanskrit Texts, iii. 3), Prajāpati, who is described as being the universe, is said to have desired (*akāmayata*) to propagate himself, and to have striven and practised rigorous abstraction (*tapā 'tapyata*). And in the same Brāhmaṇa, xiii. 7, 1, 1 (cited in Sansk. Texts, iv. 25), the self-existent Brahma himself is similarly related to have practised *tapas*, and when he found that that did not confer infinity, to have offered himself in sacrifice. The gods are also said to have attained heaven and their divine character by *tapas* (see my former paper on Vedic Mythology, p. 63; and Sansk. Texts, iv. pp. 20, 21, 24, and 288). Compare also the Taittiriya Upanishad, ii. 6, where it is said: "He (the supreme Soul) desired, 'Let me be multiplied, and produced.' He performed *tapas*, and having done so, he created all this." In his commentary on this passage, Śaṅkara explains that knowledge is called *tapas*; and that the phrase means "He reflected upon the construction, etc., of the world which was being created." It is true that all these passages from the Brāhmaṇas are of a later date than the hymn, but the R. V. itself x. 167, 1, says that Indra gained heaven by *tapas*, where the word can only mean rigorous abstraction.

This view of the word is also supported by Taitt. Br. iii. 12, 3, 1: "Let us worship with an oblation that first-born god, by whom this entire universe which exists is surrounded (*paribhūtam*)—the self-existent Brahma, which is the highest *tapas*. He is son, father, mother. *Tapas* was produced as the first object of devotion."

In the Mahābhārata, Śāntiparva, 10836, Prajāpati is said to have created living beings by *tapas*, after having entered on religious observances, or austerities (*vratāni*).

Tapas is also mentioned as the source from which creatures were produced, A. V. xiii. 1, 10.

Compare Bhāgavata Purāṇa ii. 9, 6, 7, 19, 23, and iii. 10, 4 ff.

Tapas is connected with an oblation of boiled milk in a passage of the A. V. iv. 11, 6: "May we, renowned, attain to the world of righteousness by that ceremony of offering boiled milk, by *tapas*, whereby the gods ascended to heaven, the centre of immortality, having left behind their body." And xi. 5, 5, connects *tapas* with heat: "The Brahmachārin, born before Brahma, dwelling (or clothed) in heat, arose through *tapas*."

In A. V. vii. 61, *tapas* is connected with Agni.

In A. V. xvii. 1, 24, *tapas* means the heat of the sun.

Tapas is mentioned along with *karman* in A. V. xi. 8, 2, and is said to have been produced from it (*ibid.* v. 6).

¹ The commentator on the Taittiriya Brāhmaṇa, ii. 8, 9, 5 (p. 928 of Calcutta edition, in Bibl. Ind.) says: "The Vājasaneyins record that desire is the cause of all action, and say; 'this Puruṣa is himself actuated by desire' (Brhadār. Up. p. 854). And Vyāsa too declares in his *smṛiti*, 'That which binds this world is desire; it has no other bond.' The same thing, too, is seen within our own observation; for it is only after a man has first desired something that he strives after it, and so experiences pleasure or pain." In numerous passages of the Brāhmaṇas and Upanishads (as in those quoted in the last note), we are told that the first step in the creation was that Prajāpati or Brahma desired (*akāmayata*).

earlier part of the process, of which they had not been witnesses. The very gods being at fault, no one on earth is able to say what was the origin of the world, and whether it had any creator or not. Even its ruler in the highest heaven may not be in possession of the great secret.

Such a confession of ignorance on the part of a Vedic rishi could not, however, be taken in its obvious and literal sense by those who held the Veda to have been derived from an omniscient and infallible source. And in consequence the commentator on the Taittiriya Brāhmaṇa is obliged to explain it away in the following fashion :

“There are certain persons who condemn revelation, and propound different theories of creation by their own reason. Thus the followers of Kaṇāda and Gautama, etc., consider atoms to be the ultimate cause of the world. Kapila and others say that an independent and unconscious Pradhāna is the cause. The Mādhyamikas declare that the world rose out of a void. The Lokāyatikas say that the universe has no cause at all, but exists naturally. All these men are in error. Our hymn asks what mortal knows by actual observation the cause of the world ? and not having himself had ocular proof, how can any one say it was so and so ? The points to be declared are the material and instrumental causes of the universe, and these cannot be told. The reason of this impossibility is next set forth. Can the gods give the required information ? Or if not, how can any man ? The gods cannot tell, for they did not precede, but are subsequent to, the creation. Since the gods are in this predicament, who else can know ? The purport is, that as neither gods nor men existed before the creation, and cannot therefore have witnessed it, and as they are at the same time unable to conclude anything regarding

In his remarks on the passage of the Taitt. Upanishad, quoted in the last note, Sāyaṇa considers it necessary to explain that the supreme Soul is not subject to the dominion of desire, as if, like men, he had any wish unfulfilled, or were subject to the influence of any desirable objects external to himself, or were dependent on other things as instruments of attaining any such external objects ; but on the contrary, is independent of all other things, and himself, with a view to the interests of living beings, originated his desires which possess the characteristics of truth and knowledge (or true knowledge), and from being a part of himself, are perfectly pure. I shall below treat further of Kāma, as a deity, and of his correspondence with the Greek *Ἔρως*, as one of the first principles of creation.

it, from the absence of any other proper means of knowledge or inference, this great mystery can only be understood from the revelation in the Vedas.

“The last verse of the hymn declares that the ruler of the universe knows, or that even he does not know, from what material cause this visible world arose, and whether that material cause exists in any definite form or not. That is to say, the declaration that ‘he knows’ is made from the stand-point of that popular conception which distinguishes between the ruler of the universe, and the creatures over whom he rules ; while the proposition that ‘he does not know’ is asserted on the ground of that highest principle which, transcending all popular conceptions, affirms the identity of all things with the supreme Soul, which cannot see any other existence as distinct from itself.”

The sense of this last clause is, that the supreme Soul can know nothing of any object external to itself, since no such object exists.

It would, however, be absurd to suppose that the simple author of the hymn entertained any such transcendental notion as this. He makes no pretension to infallibility, but honestly acknowledges the perplexity which he felt in speculating on the great problem of the origin of the universe.¹

As a further illustration both of the more ancient and the later ideas of the Indians regarding the creation of the world, and the manner in which the supreme Spirit, previously quiescent, was moved to activity, I add another passage from the Taittirīya Brâhmaṇa ii. 2, 9, 1, with some of the commentator’s remarks. The text of the Brâhmaṇa runs thus : “ This [universe] was not originally anything. There was neither heaven, nor earth, nor atmosphere. That, being nonexistent (*asat*), thought, ‘Let me be.’ That became kindled (or practised rigorous abstraction, *atapyata*). From that heat (or abstraction) smoke was produced. That was again kindled (*atapyata*). From that heat fire was produced. That was again kindled. From that heat light was pro-

¹ Similar perplexity is elsewhere expressed on other subjects by the authors of the hymns. See Sanskrit Texts, iii. 177.

duced." And so on,—flame, rays, blazes, etc., being generated by a repetition of the same process. (It may perhaps be considered that the manner in which the word *tapas* is used in this passage is favourable to the idea that in R. V. x. 129, 3, it signifies heat rather than rigorous abstraction).

Taitt. Br. ii. 2, 9, 10. "From nonentity mind (*manas*) was created. Mind created Prajâpati. Prajâpati created offspring."

The commentator's explanation of the first part of this passage is in substance as follows: "Before the creation no portion existed of the world which we now see. Let such a state of non-existence be supposed. It conceived the thought, 'Let me attain the condition of existence.' Accordingly this state of things is distinctly asserted in the Upanishad: 'This was originally non-existent. From it existence was produced.' Here by the word 'non-existent' a state of void (or absolute nullity), like that expressed in the phrase 'a hare's horns,' is not intended; but simply a state in which name and form were not manifested. Hence the Vâjasaneyins repeat the text: 'This was then undeveloped: let it be developed through name and form.' Earth, the waters, etc., are 'name.' Hardness and fluidity, etc., are 'form.'" The words "undeveloped" and "developed" are then defined, and Manu i. 5, is quoted in proof. The supposition that the passage before us can be intended to denote a void is next contravened by adducing the text of the Chhândogya Upanishad above quoted, where that theory is referred to and contradicted. "In the Aitareya Upanishad (at the beginning) it is declared: 'Soul alone was in the beginning this [universe]. Nothing else was active.' Hence the negation in our text, 'This [universe] was not originally anything,' refers to the world, consisting of name and form, framed by the supreme Spirit, and is not to be understood absolutely. Designated by the word 'non-existent' (*asat*) because devoid of name and form, but still (really) existing (*sat*), the principle [called] the supreme Spirit, impelled by the works of the creatures absorbed in It, conceived a thought in the way of a reflection, 'Let me be manifested as existent in the shape

of name and form.' As a man in a deep sleep awakes that he may enjoy the fruit of his works; so the thought of causing all living creatures to enjoy the fruit of their works arose in the supreme Spirit. Possessed by such a thought, that principle [called] the supreme Spirit, practised rigorous abstraction (*tapas*) as a means of creating name and form. Here *tapas* does not mean any such thing as the *kṛchhra* or *chāndrāyana* penances, or the like; but denotes consideration regarding the particular objects which were to be created. Wherefore the Atharva Veda writers record the text, 'He who is omniscient, all-understanding, whose *tapas* consists of knowledge.' From the fact that this *tapas* has nothing of the character of any penance, it is shown to denote the reflection of a being who though unembodied is yet omnipotent," etc., etc. "From the supreme God, being such as has been described, in conformity with his volition, a certain smoke was produced," etc., etc.

PURUSHA.

Another important, but in many places obscure, hymn of the Rig Veda, in which the unity of the Godhead is recognized, though in a pantheistic sense, is the 90th of the tenth book, the celebrated Purusha Sūkta,¹ which is as follows:

"1. Purusha has a thousand heads (a thousand arms, A.V.), a thousand eyes, and a thousand feet. On every side enveloping the earth, he transcended [it] by a space of ten fingers. 2. Purusha himself is this whole [universe], whatever has been, and whatever shall be. He is also the lord of immortality, since through food he expands."²

¹ Translations of this hymn (which is also given with slight variations in Vāj. S. 31, 1-16, and A. V. 19, 6, and 7, 5, 4) will be found in Mr. Colebrooke's Misc. Ess. i. 167 (see also the note in p. 309 of the same volume); as also in my Sanskrit Texts, i. 6 ff.; and (into French) in the Preface to Burnouf's Bhāgavata Purāṇa, vol. i. pp. cxxxi. ff. (where see the notes). I have now endeavoured (in some places with the aid of Professor Aufrecht) to improve the translation I formerly gave, and to supply some further illustrations of the ideas in the hymn. I have passed over several obscurities on which I have been unable to throw any light. The first two verses are given in the Śvetāśvatara Upanishad, iii. 14, 15, where the commentary may be consulted.

² The sense of the last clause is obscure. It may also mean, according to the commentators on the Vāj. S. and the Śvetāśv. Upan. "(he is also the lord of) that which grows by food." According to the paraphrase in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa

3. Such is his greatness ; and Purusha is superior to this. All existing things are a quarter¹ of him, and that which is immortal in the sky is three quarters of him. 4. With three quarters Purusha mounted upwards. A quarter of him again was produced here below. He then became diffused everywhere among things animate and inanimate. 5. From him Virāj was born, and from Virāj, Purusha.²

(see below), it means, "seeing he has transcended mortal nutriment." The parallel passage of the A. V. (19, 6, 4) reads, "he is also the lord of immortality, since he became united with another (*yad anyenābhavat saha*).

¹ Compare A. V. x. 8, 7 and 13: "7. With the half he produced the whole world; but what became of that which was the [other] half of him? 13. Prajāpati moves within the womb; though unseen, he is born in many forms. With the half he produced the whole world; but the [other] half of him, what sign is there of it?" Compare also A. V. x. 7, 8, 9, which will be found translated further on.

² The commentator on the Vāj. San. (where, as I have said, this hymn is also found) explains this reciprocal generation of Virāj from Purusha, and again of Purusha from Virāj, by saying, in conformity with Vedantic principles, that Virāj in the form of the mundane egg sprang from Âdi-Purusha (primeval Purusha), who then entered into this egg, which he animates as its vital soul or divine principle. According to Manu, i. 8-11, the supreme Deity first created the waters, in which he placed an egg, from which again he himself was born as Brahmā, also called Nārāyaṇa. This male (Purusha), created by the eternal, imperceptible, first Cause, is, as v. 11 repeats, called Brahmā. Brahmā by his own thought split the egg (v. 12). After various other details regarding the creation, the writer goes on to say (v. 32) that Brahmā divided his own body into two halves, of which one became a male (Purusha) and the other a female, in whom he produced Virāj. This male (Purusha) Virāj again creates Manu himself (v. 33). We here see that the word male or Purusha is applied by Manu to three beings—viz., first, to Brahmā (v. 11); second, to the male formed by Brahmā from the half of his own body (v. 32); and thirdly, to Virāj, whom Brahmā, or his male half, produced from the female who was made out of the other half of his body (see also Wilson's Vishṇu Purāṇa, p. 105, note, in Dr. Hall's edition).

Another explanation of the verse is, however, to be obtained by comparing the similar passage in R. V. x. 72, 4: "Dakṣa sprang from Aditi, and Aditi from Dakṣa," which I have quoted in my former paper (pp. 72 f.), together with the observation of Yāska (Nirukta, xi. 23), that this startling declaration may be explicable on the ground that these two deities had the same origin, or, in conformity with a characteristic of their divine nature, may have been produced from each other, and have derived their substance from each other. (See Nirukta, vii. 4, quoted in Sansk. Texts, iv. 134, where the author repeats the same idea regarding the nature of the gods). Compare A. V. xiii. 4, 29 ff., where Indra is said to be produced from a great many different gods, and they reciprocally from him.

The S. P. Br. (xiii. 6, 1, 2) understands Virāj in the passage before us to signify not any male power, but the metre of that name: "The Virāj has forty syllables. Hence he (Purusha) obtains the Virāj, according to the text, 'From him sprang Virāj and from Virāj Purusha.' This is that Virāj. From this Virāj, therefore, it is that he begets Purusha the sacrifice."

Virāj occurs again in the Rīg Veda, ix. 96, 18, and x. 130, 5, as feminine and as the name of a metre. It is also found in x. 169, 3, and x. 166, 1, as well as in i. 188, 5, where it is an adjective. In the A. V. it is of frequent occurrence, and sometimes is an epithet, and sometimes denotes the metre of that name. Thus in ix. 2, 5 (comp. Vāj. Sanh. 17, 3, and S. P. Br. ix. 2, 1, 19) it is said, "That daughter of thine, O Kāma, is called the Cow, she whom sages deno-

As soon as born he extended beyond the earth, both behind and before.¹ 6. When the gods offered up Purusha as a sacrifice, the spring was its clarified butter, summer its fuel, and autumn the [accompanying] oblation. 7. This victim, Purusha born in the beginning, they immolated on the sacrificial grass; with him as their offering, the gods, Sādhyas, and Rishis sacrificed. 8. From that universal oblation were produced curds and clarified butter. He (Purusha) formed those aerial creatures, and the animals, both wild and

minate Vāch Virāj" (comp. R. V. viii. 90, 16, "The goddess Vāch . . . the cow, who has come from the gods"). Again in viii. 9, 1 . . . "The two calves of Virāj rose out of the water. 2. . . . The desire-bestowing calf of Virāj." It is shortly afterwards (v. 7) strangely said that Virāj, though spoken of in the feminine gender, is the *father of brahman*, whether that mean the deity or devotion. "They say that Virāj is the father of devotion. Bring her to us thy friends in as many forms (as thou canst). 8. She whom, when she advances, sacrifices follow, and stand still when she stands; she, by whose will and energy the adorable being moves, is Virāj in the highest heaven. 9. Without breath, she moves by the breath of breathing females. Virāj follows after Svarāj," etc. The calf of Virāj is mentioned again in xiii. 1, 33. In viii. 10, 1, it is said of her: "Virāj was formerly all this [universe]. Every king was afraid of her when she was born, lest she herself should become this. 2. She ascended. She entered the Gārhapatya fire. He who knows this becomes master of the house," etc. And in ix. 10, 24, we read: "Virāj is Vach, is the earth, and the air, is Prajāpati, is Death, the ruler of the Sādhyas," etc. In reading these passages we should bear in mind the great power attributed by the Vedic writers to hymns and metres. See Weber's Ind. Stud. viii. 8-12; and Sanskrit Texts, iii. 172 ff. On the virtues of the Virāj in particular, see Weber, as above, pp. 56 ff. In the following texts the word may be a masculine name or an epithet: A. V. xi. 5, 16. "The āchārya is a brahmachārin; the brahmachārin is Prajāpati. Prajāpati shines (*virājati*). He became the resplendent, powerful Indra." So also in iv. 11, 7; xiii. 3, 5; xi. 5, 7; and viii. 5, 10, where Virāj precedes or follows the words Prajāpati and Parameshthin. In xi. 4, 12, Virāj is identified with Prāṇa. In the Bṛhad Âr. Up. Virāj is called the wife of Purusha. (See p. 217 of Dr. Rœr's translation).

¹ In the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, ii. 6, 15 ff. the preceding verses of our hymn are paraphrased as follows: "Purusha himself is all this which has been, shall be, and is. By him this universe is enveloped, and yet he occupies but a span. That Prāṇa [explained by the commentator as the sun], while kindling his own sphere, kindles also that which is without it. So too Purusha, while kindling Virāj, kindles whatever is within and without him. He is the lord of immortality and security, since he has transcended mortal nutriment. Hence, O Brahman, this greatness of Purusha is unsurpassable. The wise know all things to exist in the feet [or quarters] of Purusha, who has the worlds for feet [or quarters]: immortality, blessedness, and security, abide in the heads of the three-headed. Three quarters, viz., the abodes of ascetics, are beyond the three worlds; while the remaining quarter, the abode of householders who have not adopted a life of celibacy, is within them. Purusha has traversed both the two separate paths, that of enjoyment and abstinence, that is, of ignorance and knowledge; for he is the receptacle of both. From him was produced an egg, consisting of the elements, and senses, and three qualities. Purusha penetrated through its entire substance, as the sun warms with his rays."

There is a good deal about Purusha in the Bṛhad Âranyaka Upanishad. See pp. 217, 220-228, 233, 250, 252, 267, of Dr. Rœr's Eng. transl.

tame. 9. From that universal sacrifice sprang the hymns called *rich* and *sāman*, the metres, and the *yajus*. 10. From it were produced horses, and all animals with two rows of teeth, cows, goats, and sheep. 11. When they divided Purusha, into how many parts did they distribute him? What was his mouth? What were his arms? What were called his thighs and feet? 12. The Brāhman was his mouth; the Rājanya became his arms; the Vaiṣya was his thighs; the Śūdra sprang from his feet. 13. The moon was produced from his soul (*manas*); the sun from his eye; Indra and Agni from his mouth; and Vāyu from his breath. 14. From his navel came the atmosphere; from his head arose the sky; from his feet came the earth; from his ear the four quarters: so they formed the worlds. 15. When the gods in performing their sacrifice bound Purusha as a victim, there were seven pieces of wood laid for him round the fire, and thrice seven pieces of fuel employed. 16. With sacrifice the gods worshipped the Sacrifice. These were the first rites. These great beings attained to the heaven where the gods, the ancient Sādhyas, reside."

There are two other hymns of the R. V. besides the Purusha Sūkta in which the Deity is represented as either the agent, the object, or the subject of sacrifice. In x. 81, 5, Viṣvakarman is said to sacrifice himself, or to himself; and in verse 6, to offer up heaven and earth. And in x. 130 (where, in verse 2, Pumân may be equivalent to Purusha) it is said (verse 3) either that the gods sacrificed to the [supreme] god, or that they offered him up.¹

In the Nirukta, x. 26,² a legend, having reference to R. V. x. 81, is quoted to the effect that Viṣvakarman, the son of Bhuvana, first of all offered up all worlds in a *sarvamedha*,

¹ The rendering in these passages depends on the exact sense assigned to the word *yaj*. See Sanskrit Texts, iv. 7-9.

² Ibid., p. 7. In the S. P. Br. xi. 1, 8, 2, it is said that "Prajâpati gave himself to the gods, and became their sacrifice. For sacrifice is the food of the gods. He then created sacrifice as his own image (or counterpart). Hence they say that 'Prajâpati is sacrifice;' for he created it as his own image." In the M. Bh. Śântip. 9616, also, it is said that Prajâpati formed the sacrificial victims, and sacrifice itself, and with it worshipped the gods. The S. P. Brāhmana says, elsewhere, xiv. 3, 2, 1, "This which is sacrifice is the soul of all bodies and of all gods."

and ended by sacrificing himself. And in the Śatapatha Brâhmaṇa, xiii. 7, 1, 1, the same thing is related of the self-existent Brahma himself, who, finding that he could not by rigorous abstraction (*tapas*) attain to the infinitude which he desired, resolved to offer up himself in created things, and created things in himself, and having done this, attained to pre-eminence, self-effulgence, and supreme dominion. It is evident that the author of this passage had not attained to that clear conception of the self-sufficiency and omnipotence of a self-existent Being which later Indian writers acquired.¹

In the hymn before us the gods are distinctly said (in vv. 6, 7, and 15) to have offered up Purusha himself as a victim. And in the Bhâgavata Purâna, ii. 6, 21-26,² which is a paraphrase of this passage, Brahmâ is made to say that he derived the materials of sacrifice from Purusha's members, and immolated that being, the lord himself.

It is not very easy to seize the precise idea which is expressed in the latter part of this singular hymn, the Purusha Sûkta. It was evidently produced at a period when the ceremonial of sacrifice had become largely developed, when great virtue was supposed to reside in its proper celebration, and when a mystical meaning had come to be attached to the various materials and instruments of the ritual as well as to the different members of the victim. Penetrated with a sense of the sanctity and efficacy of the rite, and familiar with all its details, the priestly poet to whom we owe the hymn has thought it no profanity to represent the supreme Purusha himself as forming the victim, whose immolation by the agency of the gods gave birth by its transcendent power to the visible universe and all its inhabitants.³

¹ The word *svayambhû* does not, however, always signify self-existence in the absolute sense. Thus Kasyapa is in A.V. xix. 53, 10, called *svayambhû*, and is yet said to have sprung from *Kâla* (time).

² See Sanskrit Texts, iv. p. 9.

³ Dr. Haug, when treating of the importance attached to sacrifice by the Brahmans, remarks (Pref. to Ait. Br. p. 73): "The creation of the world itself was even regarded as the fruit of a sacrifice performed by the Supreme Being." If the learned author here refers to the Purusha Sûkta it would have been more exact to say that the creation was regarded as the fruit of an immolation of the Supreme Being. But his remark may be justified by the other passages I have cited.

The two following verses in the Vājasaneyi Sanhitā refer to Purusha :

xxx. 18 (= Śvetāśvatara Upanishad, iii. 8). "I know this great Purusha, resplendent as the sun, above the darkness. It is by knowing him that a man overpasses death. There is no other road to go."¹ (The Purusha Sūkta occupies verses 1-16 of the same section in which this verse is found.)

xxxii. 2. "All winkings of the eye have sprung from Purusha, the resplendent. No one has embraced him either above, or below, or in the middle."²

The A. V. contains a long hymn (x. 2) on the subject of Purusha, which does not throw much light on the conception of his character, but contains a number of curious ideas. The Deity being conceived and described in this hymn as the Man, or Male (Purusha)—the great archetype and impersonation of that active energy of which men are the feeble representatives upon earth—the poet has been led to imagine the object of his adoration as invested with a visible form, and with members analogous to those of the human frame ; and he then goes on to speculate on the agency by which the different portions of Purusha's body could have been constructed, and the source from which he could have derived the various attributes through which he formed the universe and ordained the conditions under which its several departments exist. The minute questions regarding the members of Purusha with which the hymn opens may have been suggested to the author by an observation of the curious structure of the human body, and by the wonder which that observation had occasioned. Throughout the hymn Purusha is not represented as a self-existing, self-sufficient Being, but as dependent on other gods for his various powers and attributes. The details are too tedious, and in some places too obscure, to admit of my giving them in full, but I shall state the

¹ Comp. A. V. vii. 53, 7 : "Ascending from the darkness to the highest heaven, we have reached the sun, a god among the gods, the uppermost light."

² The following verse given in the Nirukta ii. 3, is from the Śvetāśvatara Upanishad, iii. 9 : "This entire universe is filled by that Purusha to whom there is nothing superior, from whom there is nothing different, than whom no one is more minute or more vast, and who alone, fixed like a tree, abides in the sky."

substance, and adduce the most important parts more or less in extenso. The hymn begins thus :

"1. By whom were the heels of Purusha produced? by whom was his flesh brought together? by whom were his ancles, by whom were his fingers and his muscles, made? by whom the apertures of his body? 2. From what did they construct his ancles below and his knees above?" After similar questions about his legs, thighs, trunk, etc., the author proceeds : "4. How many and who were the gods who joined together the chest and the neck of Purusha? how many formed his breasts, who his elbows? (?) how many connected his shoulders, and ribs? 6. Who opened the seven apertures in his head, these ears, nostrils, eyes, and mouth?" "Whence," asks the poet (v. 9), "does Purusha bring many things pleasant and unpleasant, sleep, fear, fatigue, and various kinds of enjoyments? 10. How do suffering, distress, evil, as well as success and opulence, exist in Purusha? 12. Who assigned to him form,¹ magnitude, name,¹ motion, and consciousness, (13) and the different vital airs? 14. What god placed in him sacrifice, truth, and falsehood? Whence come death and immortality? 15. Who clothed him with a garment? who created his life? who gave him strength and speed? 16. Through whom did he spread out the waters, cause the day to shine, kindle the dawn, bring on the twilight? 17. Who placed in him seed, that the thread (of being) might be continued? who imparted to him understanding? 18. Through whom did he envelop the earth, surround (or transcend) the sky, surpass by his greatness the mountains and all created things? 24. By whom was this earth made, and the sky placed above? By whom was this expanse of atmosphere raised aloft and stretched across? 25. The earth was made by Brahma, and Brahma is placed above as the sky. Brahma is the expanse of atmosphere raised aloft and stretched across. 26. When Atharvan joined together the head and the heart [of Purusha], air issued upwards from the brain in his head (?). 27. That head of Atharvan [is] a

¹ Here, as above noticed, we have the *nāma* and *rūpa* of the Vedantists.

divine receptacle, closed up. Breath guards this head, and so do food and mind. 28. Purusha has pervaded all the regions which are extended aloft and across. He who knows the city (*pur*) of Brahma from which *Purusha* is named, (29) who knows that city of Brahma, invested with immortality, to him Brahma and Brahma's offspring have given sight, and breath, and progeny. 30. Neither sight nor breath abandons before [the term of natural] decay the man who knows the city of Brahma from which *Purusha* is named. 31. Within that impregnable city of the gods, which has eight circles (compare A.V. xi. 4, 22) and nine gates, there exists a golden receptacle, celestial, invested with light. 32. Those acquainted with Brahma (divine science, or the Deity) know that living (*âtmanvat*) object of adoration which resides in this golden receptacle with three spokes, and triple supports.¹ 33. Brahma has entered into the impregnable golden city, resplendent, bright, invested with renown."

In the §. P. Br. xiii. 6, 1, 1 (see Sansk. Texts, iv. 25) the word *Nârâyana* is coupled with *Purusha*, and it is said that this Being desired to surpass all beings, and become himself the entire universe, and that he accomplished his object by celebrating the *Sarramedha* sacrifice. *Purusha Nârâyana* is again mentioned in the same *Brâhmaṇa* (xii. 3, 4, 1) as receiving instruction from *Prajâpati*: "*Prajâpati* said to *Purusha Nârâyana*, 'Sacrifice, sacrifice.' He replied, 'Thou sayest to me, Sacrifice, sacrifice. I have sacrificed thrice. By the morning oblation the *Vasus* came, by the mid-day oblation the *Rudras* came, and by the third oblation the *Âdityas* came to my place of sacrifice, where I was.' *Prajâpati* rejoined, 'Sacrifice; I will tell thee how thy hymns shall be strung like a gem on a thread, or as a thread in a gem.'"

¹ One line of A.V. x. 8, 43, is identical with one line of this verse, though the other line is different. The whole runs thus: "The knowers of *brahma* know that living object of adoration which resides in the lotus with nine gates, invested with the three qualities" (*tribhir guṇebhir ârytam*). Roth, s.v. *guṇa*, translates the last three words by "triply enveloped," and refers in support of this sense to vv. 29 and 32 of the hymn before us, and to *Chhândogya Upanishad*, viii. 1, 1. It is possible, however, that there may be here a first reference to the three *guṇas* afterwards so celebrated in Indian philosophical speculation.

SKAMBHA.

In the following hymn of the A.V. (x. 7) the Supreme Deity appears to be celebrated under the appellation of Skambha (or Support). Though it is rather tedious, I shall translate it nearly in full, as these ancient guesses after truth no doubt contain the germ of much of the later speculation on the same topics. In the first part (vv. 1-6, 10-12) Skambha is considered (like Purusha, with whom he seems to be identified, v. 15), as a vast embodied being, co-extensive with the universe, and comprehending in his several members not only the different parts of the material world, but a variety of abstract conceptions, such as austere meditation (*tapas*), faith, truth, and the divisions of time. He is distinct from, and superior to, Prajâpati, who founds the worlds upon him (vv. 7, 8, 17). The thirty-three gods are comprehended in him (vv. 13, 22, and 27), and arose out of nonentity, which forms his highest member, and, as well as entity, is embraced within him (vv. 10, 25). The gods who form part of him, as branches of a tree (v. 38), do him homage, and bring him tribute (v. 39). He is identified with Indra (in vv. 29 and 30); and perhaps also with the highest Brahma who is mentioned in vv. 32-34, 36, and in the first verse of the next hymn, x. 8, 1. In verse 36, however, this Brahma is represented as being born (or, perhaps, developed) from toil and *tapas*, whilst in x. 8, 1, the attributes of the Supreme Deity are assigned to him. In compositions of this age, however, we are not to expect very accurate or rigorous thinking, or perfect consistency.

"1. In what member of his does rigorous abstraction (*tapas*) stand? in which is the ceremonial (*rta*) contained? In what parts do religious observance (*vrata*) and faith abide? In what member is truth established?
2. From what member does Agni blaze? from which does Mâtarisvan (the wind) blow [*lit.* purify]? from which does the moon pursue her course, traversing the mighty body of Skambha? 3. In what member does the earth reside? in which the atmosphere? in which is the sky placed,

and in which the space above the sky? 4. Whither tending, does the upward fire blaze? whither tending, does the wind blow? Tell who is that Skambha to whom the paths tend, and into whom they enter. 5. Whither do the half-months, and the months, in concert with the year, proceed? Tell who is that Skambha to whom the seasons and other divisions of the year advance. 6. Whither tending do the two young females of diverse aspects, the day and the night, hasten in unison? Tell who is that Skambha to whom the waters tend and go? 7. Who is that Skambha on whom Prajâpati has supported and established all the worlds? 8. How far did Skambha penetrate into that highest, lowest, and middle universe, comprehending all forms, which Prajâpati created? and how much of it was there which he did not penetrate? 9. How far did Skambha penetrate into the past? and how much of the future is contained in his receptacle? How far did Skambha penetrate into that one member which he separated into a thousand parts? 10. Tell who is that Skambha in whom the waters, divine thought (*brahma*), and men recognize worlds and receptacles [as existing], and within whom are nonentity and entity; (11) in whom rigorous abstraction (*tapas*), energizing, maintains its highest action (*vrata*), in whom the ceremonial, faith, the waters, and divine science are comprehended; (12) in whom, earth, atmosphere, sky, fire, moon, sun, and wind are placed; (13) in whose body all the thirty-three gods are contained;¹ (14) in whom the earliest Rishis, the Rik, the Sâman, the Yajus, the earth, and the one Rishi reside; (15) that Purusha, in whom immortality and death are comprehended; who has the ocean within him as his veins; (16) that Skambha of whom the four regions are the primeval arteries, and in whom sacrifice displays its energy. 17. They who know the divine essence (*brahma*) in Purusha, know Parameshthin. He who knows Parameshthin, and he who knows Prajâpati—they who know the highest divine mystery (*brâhmaṇa*)² know in consequence Skambha. 18. Tell who is that Skambha of whom Vaiṣvânara (Agni) is the head, the Angi-

¹ See Dr. Haug's Essay on the sacred language of the Parsees, p. 233.

² See vv. 20, 33, and 37 of A.V. x. 8, to be quoted below.

raises the eye, and the Yâtus (demons) are the limbs; (19) of whom, they say, divine knowledge (*brahma*) is the mouth, the Madhukaṣâ¹ the tongue, and the Virâj the udder, (20) from whom they hewed off the Rik verses, and cut off the Yajus; of whom the Sâma verses are the hairs, and the Atharvân-girases (*i.e.* the Atharvaveda) the mouth.² 21. Men regard the branch of nonentity,³ which is prominent, as if it were paramount; and inferior men, as many as worship thy branch, regard it as an entity. 22. Tell who is that Skambha in whom the Âdityas, Rudras, and Vasus are contained, on whom the past, the future, and all worlds are supported, (23) whose treasure the thirty-three gods continually guard. Who now knows the treasure which ye guard, O gods? 24. In whom, O gods, the knowers of sacred science (*brahma*) worship the highest divine essence (*brahma*). The priest (*brahmâ*) who knows these [gods] face to face will be a sage. 25. Mighty indeed are those gods who have sprung from nonentity. Men say that that nonentity is one, the highest, member of Skambha (compare v. 10 above). 26. Where Skambha generating, brought the Ancient (*purâṇa*) into existence, they consider that that Ancient is one member of Skambha, (27) in whose members the thirty-three gods found their several bodies. Some possessors of sacred knowledge know those

¹ I am indebted to Professor Aufrecht for an explanation of this word, and an indication of some passages in which it is mentioned. In R. V. i. 22, 3, and i. 157, 4, the Aṣvins are said to have a honied whip, *kaṣâ madhumatî*, with which they are besought to sprinkle the worshippers, or their sacrifice. The Maruts are also said in R. V. i. 37, 3, and i. 168, 4, to have whips, though they are not said to be honied. In the Nighaṇṭu, however, the sense of speech is ascribed to *Kaṣâ*; and a mystical signification is also assigned to the word *madhu*, honey, which Dadhyanch is said, R. V. i. 116, 12, and i. 117, 22, to have made known to the Aṣvins. This is explained by Sâyana on these two passages as meaning that he gave them a Brâhmana revealing the Madhvidyâ; and Mahidhara on Vâj. S. 7, 11, understands the *kaṣâ madhumatî* as referring to this mystic lore. This Madhukaṣâ is celebrated at considerable length in A. V. ix. 1, where it is said that she "sprang from the sky, the earth, the air, the sea, fire, and wind," and that "all creatures, worshipping her who dwells in immortality, rejoice in their hearts." In vv. 3, 10, she is said to be the "brilliant granddaughter of the Maruts," and in v. 4, to be the "mother of the Âdityas, the daughter of the Vasus, the life of creatures, and the centre of immortality."

² Compare A. V. ix. 6, 1: "He who clearly knows Brahma, of whom the materials of sacrifice are the joints, the Rik-verses are the backbone, the Sâma-verses the hairs, the Yajus is said to be the heart, and the oblation the covering."

³ The sense of this verse is obscure, and it does not seem to be very closely connected either with what precedes or with what follows. I have adopted partly the rendering suggested by Professor Aufrecht.

thirty-three gods. 28. Men know Hiranyagarbha¹ to be supreme and ineffable. Skambha in the beginning shed forth that gold (*hiranya*, out of which Hiranyagarbha arose) in the midst of the world. 29. In Skambha are contained the worlds, rigorous abstraction, and the ceremonial. Skambha, I clearly know thee to be contained entire in Indra. 30. In Indra are contained the worlds, rigorous abstraction, and the ceremonial. Indra, I clearly know thee to be contained entire in Skambha. 31. (The worshipper) repeatedly invokes the [god who bears the one] name by the name [of the other god] before the sun, before the dawn.² When the unborn first sprang into being, he attained to that independent dominion, than that which nothing higher has ever been. 32. Reverence be to that greatest Brahma, of whom the earth is the measure,³ the atmosphere the belly, who made the sky his head, (33) of whom the sun and the ever-renewed moon are the eye, who made Agni his mouth, (34) of whom the wind formed two of the vital airs, and the Angirases the eye, who made the regions his organs of sense (?) 35. Skambha established both these [worlds], earth and sky, the wide atmosphere, and the six vast regions; Skambha pervaded this entire universe. 36. Reverence to that greatest Brahma who, born from toil and austere abstraction (*tapas*), penetrated all the worlds, who made soma for himself alone.⁴ 37. How is it that the wind does not rest? how is not the soul quiescent? why do not the waters, seeking after truth, ever repose? 38. The great object of adoration [is] absorbed in severe abstraction (*tapas*) in the midst of the world, on the surface of the waters. To him all the gods are joined, as the branches around the trunk of a tree. 39. Say who is that Skambha to whom, on account of his works(?), the gods with hands, feet, voice, ear, eye, present continually an unlimited tribute.⁵ 40. By him darkness is dispelled: he is

¹ See above, p. 344.

² The meaning of this, as suggested by Professor Aufrecht, is that by invoking Indra, the worshipper really worships Skambha.

³ *Pramá.* Compare, however, R.V. x. 130, 3.

⁴ Such is the sense according to Roth, s.v. *kevala*.

⁵ Compare A.V. x. 8, 15 . . . "the great object of adoration in the midst of the world: to him the rulers of realms bring tribute."

free from evil: in him are all the three luminaries which reside in Prajâpati. 41. He who knows the golden reed standing in the waters is the mysterious Prajâpati.”¹

I quote in addition some verses from the hymn next in order, A. V. x. 8:

“1. Reverence to that greatest Brahma who rules over the past, the future, the universe, and whose alone is the sky. 2. These two [worlds], the sky and the earth, exist, supported by Skambha. Skambha is all this which has soul, which breathes, which winks 11. That which moves, flies, stands, which has existed breathing, not breathing, and winking: that omniform (entity) has established the earth; that, combining, becomes one only. 12. The infinite extended on many sides, the infinite, and the finite all around—these two the ruler of the sky proceeds discriminating, knowing the past and the future of this (universe). 13. (=Vâj.-San. 31, 19) Prajâpati moves within the womb. Though unseen, he is born in many forms. With the half [of himself] he produced the whole world. What trace is there of the [other] half of him? 16. I regard as the greatest That whence the sun rises, and That where he sets; That is not surpassed by anything. 20. He who knows the two pieces of firewood from which wealth is rubbed out—he so knowing will understand that which is the greatest; he will know the great divine mystery (*brâhmaṇa*). . . . 34. I ask thee regarding that flower of the waters in which gods and men are fixed as spokes in the nave of a wheel,—where that was placed by [divine] skill (*mâyâ*). . . . 37. He who knows that extended thread on which these creatures are strung, who knows the thread of the thread,—he knows that great divine mystery (*brâhmaṇa*). 38. I know that extended thread on which these creatures are strung. I know the thread of the thread, and hence, too, that which is the great divine mystery. 44. The possessors of divine science (*brahma*) know that living object of adoration within the lotus with nine gates, which is

¹ In the R. V. x. 95, 4, 5 (compare Nirukta iii. 21), and S. P. Br. xi. 5, 1, 1, the word *vaitasa* has the sense of *membrum virile*. Are we to understand the word *vetasa* (reed) in the same sense here, as denoting a Linga?

enveloped by the three qualities (*guṇas*).¹ 44. Knowing that soul (*âtman*) calm, undecaying, young, free from desire, immortal, self-existent, satisfied with the essence, deficient in nothing, a man is not afraid of death."

BRAHMA.

Some verses in the two preceding hymns speak of the highest, or greatest, Brahma, in whatever sense that term is to be understood.

I am unable to state whether Brahma in the sense of the supreme Deity occurs elsewhere in the Atharva Veda, unless it be in the following passage (xi. 8, 30 ff.): "The waters, the gods, Virâj (*feminine*) with Brahma [entered into man]. Brahma entered his body; Prajâpati [entered] his body. Sûrya occupied the eye, and Vâta the breath of the man. Then the gods gave his other soul to Agni. Wherefore one who knows the man thinks, 'this is Brahma;' for all the gods are in him, as cows in a cowhouse."

In the Vâjasaneyi Sanhitâ xxiii. 47 f. we find the following words: "What light is equal to the sun? what lake is equal to the sea?" To which the following verse gives the answer: "Brahma (neuter) is a light equal to the sun. The sky is a lake equal to the sea." The commentator explains Brahma in this passage as standing either for the three Vedas or the supreme Brahma.

In Ś. P. Br. x. 6, 5, 9, it is stated in a genealogy of teachers that "Tura Kâvasheya sprang from Prajâpati, and Prajâpati from Brahma, who is self-existent." In another passage, already quoted, from the same work (xiii. 7, 1, 1) Brahma (in the neuter), the self-existent, is described as performing *tapas*, and as sacrificing himself. Ibid. x. 4, 1 9, a verse is quoted from some hymn which begins, "I celebrate the one great imperishable Brahma who was and is to be."

Again, in the same work, xi. 3, 3, 1, the same being is represented as giving over other creatures, except the Brahma-

¹ See note in p. 22.

chârin, or religious student, to death. And in xi. 2, 3, 1 ff., there is another text, which is interesting not merely as introducing Brahma, but as containing what is probably one of the oldest extant expositions of the conception of *nâma* and *rûpa* (name and form) as comprehending the whole of the phenomenal universe. These two words, as is well known, became at a later period technical terms of the Vedânta philosophy. The passage runs as follows :

“In the beginning Brahma was this [universe]. He created gods. Having created gods, he placed them in these worlds, viz. : in this world Agni, in the atmosphere Vâyû, and in the sky Sûrya; and in the worlds which were yet higher he placed the gods who are still higher. Such as are these visible worlds and these gods,—even such were those visible worlds in which he placed those gods, and such were those gods themselves. 2. Then Brahma proceeded to the higher sphere (*parârdha*—explained by the commentator to mean the Satya-loka, the most excellent, and the limit, of all the worlds). Having gone to that higher sphere, he considered ‘How now can I pervade all these worlds?’ He then pervaded them with two things, with form and with name. Whatever has a name, that is name. And even that which has no name—that which he knows by its form, that ‘such is its form’—that is form. This [universe] is so much as is (*i.e.* is co-extensive with) form and name. 3. These are the two great magnitudes (*abhve*) of Brahma. He who knows these two great magnitudes of Brahma becomes himself a great magnitude. 4. These are the two great adorable beings of Brahma. He who knows these two great adorable beings of Brahma becomes himself a great adorable being. Of these two one is the greater, viz. form; for whatever is name is also form. He who knows the greater of these two becomes greater than him than whom he wishes to become greater. 5. The gods were originally mortal, but when they were pervaded by Brahma they became immortal. By that which he sends forth from his mind (mind is form; for by mind he knows, ‘This is form’)—by that, I say, he obtains form. And by that which he sends out from his voice (voice is name; for by

voice he seizes name)—by that, I say, he obtains name. This universe is so much as is (*i.e.* is co-extensive with) form and name. All that he obtains. Now that all is undecaying. Hence he obtains undecaying merit, and an undecaying world."

Compare with this the passages of the Brhad Âranyaka Upanishad, which will be found at pp. 75 ff. and 165 ff. of Dr. Roer's translation (Bibliotheca Indica, vol. ii. part 3); and the Muṇḍaka Upanishad, iii. 2, 8, p. 164, of English version.

Brahma is also mentioned in the following texts of the Taittirîya Brâhmaṇa:—ii. 8, 8, 9. "Brahma generated the gods. Brahma [generated] this entire world. From Brahma¹ the Kshattriya is formed. Brahma in his essence (*âtman*) is the Brâhman.² Within him are all these worlds; within him this entire universe. It is Brahma who is the greatest of beings. Who can vie with him? In Brahma the thirty-three gods,—in Brahma, Indra and Prajâpati,—in Brahma all beings are contained, as in a ship." Again, it is said (iii. 12, 3, 1), "Let us worship with oblations the first born god, by whom the entire universe which exists is surrounded,—the self-existent Brahma who is the supreme austerity (*tapas*). It is he who is son, he who is father, he who is mother. Tapas came into existence, the first object of worship." Compare Taitt. Br. ii. 8, 9, 6 (quoted above, p. 343), in which Brahma is said to be the forest and the tree out of which the worlds were constructed, and as the basis on which the creator took his stand when upholding the universe.

PRAJÂPATI.

As I have observed above (p. 341), the word *prajâpati*, "lord of creatures," was originally employed as an epithet of Savitr and Soma, as it also was of Hiranyagarbha (R.V. x. 121, 10). It afterwards, however, came to denote a separate deity, who appears in three places of the Rig-veda (x. 85, 43; x. 169, 4;

¹ Here there is an allusion to the other sense of *brahma* as the Brahman caste.

² "For," says the commentator, "in the Brahman's body the supreme Brahma is manifested."

x. 184, 4) as the bestower of progeny and cattle. This god is also mentioned in the Vâjasaneyi Sanhitâ, in a verse (xxxi. 19) which comes in after one in which the great Purusha is celebrated (see above, pp. 353, 365). The verse is as follows: "Prajâpati works within the womb. Though he does not become born, he is yet born in many shapes. The wise behold his womb. In him all the worlds stand."¹ Another verse in which he is referred to is this (xxxii. 5): "He before whom nothing was born, who pervades all worlds, Prajâpati, rejoicing in his offspring, dwells in the three luminaries, as the sixteenth."

Prajâpati is frequently alluded to in the A. V. Several of these passages have been already cited above, as x. 7, 7, 17, 40, 41; x. 8, 13. Some of the others which I have observed are the following: In xi. 3, 52, he is said to have formed thirty-three worlds out of the oblation of boiled rice (*odana*). In xi. 4, 12, he is identified with *Prâna*, or breath. In xi. 5, 7, he is said, along with Parameshthin, to have been generated by the Brahmachârin, or religious student. In xi. 7, 3, he is declared to exist in the *Uchhishta*, or remnant of the sacrifice. And in xix. 53, 8, 10, he is said to have been produced by *Kâla*, or time. Most of these passages will be quoted at length further on. It will be seen that in this Veda he is not generally regarded as the supreme or primal deity.

On the subject of Prajâpati, I have elsewhere (Sanskrit Texts, iii. 3; iv. 19-24, and 47-51) brought together a considerable number of passages from the Ś. P. Br., of which I shall here only repeat the substance, adding any further notices which occur elsewhere. Prajâpati is sometimes identified with the universe, and described (in the same way as Brahma, or entity, or nonentity are in other places) as having alone existed in the beginning, as the source out of which the creation was evolved, Ś. P. Br. ii. 2, 4, 1; vii. 5, 2, 6;² xi.

¹ The first half of this verse, as we have seen, is also found in the A. V. x. 8, 13, with the different reading of *adriṣyamānaḥ*, "not being seen," for *ajāyamānaḥ*, "not being born." The second line runs thus in the A. V.: "With the half he produced the whole world. But what trace is there of his [other] half?"

² Ś. P. Br. vii. 5, 2, 6. *Prajâpati* was at first this [universe]. Being alone he desired, 'May I create food, and become reproduced.' He fashioned animals from his breath, man (*purusha*) from his soul (*manas*), the horse from his eye, the cow from his breath, the sheep from his ear, the goat from his voice. Inasmuch as he

5, 8, 1. In other texts, however, he is not represented as the source of creation, but only as one of the subsequent and subordinate agents, created by the gods (vi. 1, 1, 1 ff.), or as springing out of an egg generated by the primeval waters (xi. 1, 6, 1 ff.). He is elsewhere said to have offered sacrifice in order to produce the creation (ii. 4, 4, 1), or to have been himself half mortal and half immortal (x. 1, 3, 2 ; x. 1, 4, 1), mortal in his body, but immortal in his breath, or to have performed *tapas* for a thousand years, to get rid of sin or suffering (*pāpman*, x. 4, 4, 1).

Prajâpati may thus be said to have two characters, which, however, are not kept distinct in the Brâhmaṇa. On the one hand, he is the result of one of the efforts of the Indian intellect to conceive and express the idea of deity in the abstract, as the great first cause of all things ; while, on the other hand, when the writer begins to describe the manner in which the creative activity of the god is manifested, he at once invests him with a mythological character, and even treats him as only one of the thirty-three deities (as in Ś. P. Br. xi. 6, 3, 5. See my former Art. p. 61 ; and Roth's *Lex. s.v.* Prajâpati). In the Brâhmaṇa itself (xiv. 1, 2, 18) we have the following text, which expresses two different aspects under which the god was regarded, though, perhaps, these are not identical with the two points of view which I have stated : "Prajâpati is this sacrifice. Prajâpati is both of these two things, declared and undeclared, measured and unmeasured. Whatever he (the priest) does with the Yajus text, with that he consecrates that form of Prajâpati which is declared and measured. And what he (the priest) does silently, with that he consecrates the form of Prajâpati which is undeclared and unmeasured."

PRĀṆA.

A great variety of other deities of the most heterogeneous character are celebrated in the Atharva Veda as the possessors

created these (animals) from his breath, they say that 'the breaths are the animals.' The soul (*manas*) is the first of the breaths ; and since he fashioned man from his soul, they say that 'man is the first and strongest of the animals.' The soul is all the breaths, for they are all supported in it : since then he fashioned man from the soul, they say, 'man is all the animals,' for they are all his."

of divine power. One of these is *Prâṇa*, life or breath, to whom a hymn (xi. 4) is dedicated, of which the following is a specimen :—

“Reverence to *Prâṇa*, to whom this universe is subject; who has become the lord of all, on whom all is supported. 2. Reverence, *Prâṇa*, to thy shout, to thy thunder, to thy lightning, and to thyself when thou rainest. 3. When *Prâṇa* calls aloud to the plants with thunder, they are impregnated, they conceive, they produce abundantly. 4. When the season has arrived, and *Prâṇa* calls aloud to the plants, then everything rejoices which is upon the earth. 5. When *Prâṇa* has watered the great earth with rain, then the beasts rejoice, and [think] that they shall have strength. 6. When watered by *Prâṇa*, the plants burst forth [saying], ‘Thou hast prolonged our life, thou hast made us all fragrant.’ 7. “Reverence to thee, *Prâṇa*, coming, and to thee going, and to thee standing, and to thee sitting. . . . 9. Communicate to us thy dear form, thy dearest, with thy healing power, that we may live. 10. *Prâṇa* clothes the creatures, as a father his dear son. *Prâṇa* is the lord of all, both of what breathes and what does not breathe. 11. *Prâṇa* is death, *Prâṇa* is fever. The gods worship *Prâṇa*. *Prâṇa* places the truth-speaker in the highest world. 12. *Prâṇa* is *Virâj*, *Prâṇa* is *Deshṭrî*. All worship *Prâṇa*. *Prâṇa* is sun and moon. They call *Prajâpati*, *Prâṇa*. . . . 15. They call *Mâtariṣvan*, *Prâṇa*; the Wind is called *Prâṇa*. The past, the future, everything is supported upon *Prâṇa*. 16. The plants of *Atharvan*, of *Angiras*, of the gods, and of men, grow when thou, *Prâṇa*, quickenest. . . . 18. Whoever, O *Prâṇa*, knows this [truth regarding] thee, and on what thou art supported—all will offer him tribute in that highest world. 19. As, O *Prâṇa*, all these creatures offer thee tribute, so shall they offer tribute in that highest world to him who hears thee with willing ears.”

ROHITA.

Rohita, probably a form of Fire and of the Sun (though he is also distinguished, in the hymn I am about to quote, from both these gods), is another deity who is highly celebrated in

the A. V., where one hymn (xiii. 1) and parts of others are appropriated to his honour. The following are some of the verses in which his power is described :—xiii. 1, 6. "Rohita produced heaven and earth : there Parameshṭhin stretched the web. There Ajâ Ekapâda was contained. He established heaven and earth by his force. 7. Rohita established heaven and earth : by him the sky was supported, by him the heaven. By him the atmosphere, by him the regions were meted out. Through him the gods obtained immortality. . . . 13. Rohita is the generator, and the mouth, of sacrifice. To Rohita I offer my oblation with voice, ear, and mind. To Rohita the gods resort with gladness. . . . 14. Rohita offered a sacrifice to Viṣvakarman. From it may these fires approach me. . . . 25. The gods frame creations out of that Rohita who is a sharp-horned bull, who surpasses Agni and Sûrya, who props up the earth and the sky. . . . 37. In Rohita, who is the conqueror of wealth and cows, . . . the heaven and earth are sustained. . . . 55. He first became the sacrifice, both past and future. From him sprang all this whatever there is which shines, developed by Rohita the rishi."

In the second hymn of the same book, in which the sun is celebrated, Rohita is also named in the following verses :— "39 ff. Rohita became Time ; Rohita formerly became Prajâpati. Rohita is the mouth of sacrifices. Rohita produced the sky. 40. Rohita became the world ; Rohita shone beyond the sky ; Rohita traversed the earth and [aerial ?] ocean with his rays. 41. Rohita traversed all the regions. Rohita is the ruler of the sky. He preserves heaven, ocean, and earth—whatever exists."

And yet the gods are said to have generated Rohita (A. V. xiii. 3, 12, 23).

UCHHISHṬA.

In the hymn which follows divine power is ascribed to the remains of the sacrifice (Uchhisṭa) :

A. V. xi. 7, 1. "In the Uchhisṭa (remains of the sacrifice) are contained name, form,¹ the world, Indra and Agni, the

¹ See verse 12, of the hymn to Purusha, A. V. x. 2, above.

universe, (2) heaven and earth, all that exists, the waters, the sea, the moon, and the wind. In the Uchhishta are both the existent and the non-existent (*san*, *asaṁścha*, masc.), death, food (or strength, *vāja*), Prajâpati . . . 4. . . Brahma,¹ the ten creators of all things, the gods, are fixed on all sides to the Uchhishta as [the spokes] of a wheel to the nave." So, too, the Rik, Sâman, Yajus, the hymns, the different sorts of sacrifices, and parts of the ceremonial, etc., are comprehended in it (vv. 5-13). "14. Nine earths, oceans, skies (?), are contained in the Uchhishta. The sun shines in the Uchhishta, and in the Uchhishta are day and night. 15. The Uchhishta (masc.), the sustainer of the universe, the father of the generator, upholds the . . . *upahavya*, and the sacrifices which are secretly presented. 16. The Uchhishta, the father of the generator, the grandson of spirit (*asu*), the progenitor, the ruler, the lord of the universe, the bull, rules triumphant (?) over the earth. 17. Ceremonial, truth, rigorous abstraction, dominion, effort, righteousness and works, past, future, strength, prosperity, force, reside in the Uchhishta, which is force (comp. x. 7, 1, above). . . . 20. In the Uchhishta are embraced the resounding waters, thunder, the great *ṣruti* (veda ?), pebbles, sand, stones, plants, grass, (21) clouds, lightnings, rain. . . . 23. From the Uchhishta sprang whatever breathes and sees, with all the celestial gods, (24) the Rich and Sâman verses, metres, Purâṇas, and Yajus, . . . two of the vital airs (*prâṇa* and *apâna*), the eye, the ear, imperishableness, perishableness, (26) pleasures, enjoyments, (27) the Pitris, men, Gandharvas, and Apsarasas." (Comp. A. V. xi. 3, 21.)

SACRIFICIAL IMPLEMENTS.

Similar divine powers are ascribed to different sacrificial implements in A. V. xviii. 4, 5 : "The ladle (*julû*) has established the sky, the ladle (*upabhṛt*) the atmosphere, and the ladle (*dhruvâ*) the stable earth."

ANUMATI.

In a hymn to Anumati (according to Prof. Roth the god-

¹ Are these the ten Maharshis mentioned by Manu i. 34 f. ? In A. V. xi. 1, 1, 3, mention is made of the seven Rishis, the makers of all things (*bhûta-kṛtaḥ*). See also A. V. xii. 1, 39.

ness of good will, as well as of procreation), A.V. vii. 20, she is thus identified with all things (v. 6): "Anumati was all this [universe], whatever stands or walks, and everything that moves. May we, O goddess, enjoy thy benevolence; for thou, Anumati, dost favour us (*anumansase*)."

THE OX, OR KETTLE.

In A.V. iv. 11, 1, a divine power is ascribed to the "Ox," which, however, Professor Aufrecht thinks can only be regarded as a metaphorical ox, as it has an udder (v. 4), and gives milk; and he supposes a kettle with four legs, the *Gharma*, to be intended. As that vessel was used for boiling milk and other materials for sacrificial purposes, the allusions in this hymn to milk become intelligible; and possibly the four-legged kettle may by its form have suggested the figure of an ox.

"The ox has established the earth and the sky; the ox has established the broad atmosphere; the ox has established the six vast regions; the ox has pervaded the entire universe. 2. The ox is Indra. He watches over the beasts. As Śakra he measures the threefold paths. Milking out the worlds, whatever has been or shall be, he performs all the functions of the gods. 3. Being born as Indra among men, the kindled and glowing kettle works. . . . 5. That which neither the lord of the sacrifice nor the sacrifice rules, which neither the giver nor the receiver rules, which is all-conquering, all-supporting, and all-working (*viṣṭakarmā*),—declare to us the kettle, what quadruped it is."

THE BRAHMACHÂRIN.

The hymn to be next quoted ascribes very astonishing powers to the Brahmachârin, or religious student. Some parts of it are obscure, but the translation I give, though imperfect, will convey some idea of the contents:—

A.V. xi. 5, 1: "The Brahmachârin works, quickening both worlds. The gods are united in him. He has established the earth and the sky. He satisfies his *âchârya* (religious teacher) by *tapas*. 2. The Fathers, the heavenly hosts, all the gods separately follow after him, with the 6333 Gandharvas.

He satisfies all the gods by *tapas*. 3. The *âchârya* adopting him as a disciple, makes him a brahmachârin even in the womb, and supports him there for three nights. When he is born the gods assemble to see him. 4. This piece of fuel is the earth (compare v. 9), the second is the sky, and he satisfies the air with fuel.¹ The brahmachârin satisfies the worlds with fuel, with a girdle, with exertion, with *tapas*. 5. Born before divine science (*brahma*) the brahmachârin, arose through *tapas*, clothed with heat. From him was produced divine knowledge (*brâhmaṇa*), the highest divine science (*brahma*),² and all the gods, together with immortality. 6. The Brahmachârin advances, lighted up by fuel, clothed in a black antelope's skin, consecrated, long-bearded. He moves straightway from the eastern to the northern ocean, compressing the worlds, and again expanding them. 7. The Brahmachârin, generating divine science, the waters, the world, Prajâpati, Parameshthî, Virâj, having become an embryo in the womb of immortality, having become Indra, crushed the Asuras. 8. The Âchârya has constructed both these spheres, broad and deep, the earth and the sky. The Brahmachârin preserves them by *tapas*. In him the gods are united. 9. It was the Brahmachârin who first produced this broad earth and the sky as an alms. Making them two pieces of fuel (compare v. 4), he worships. In them all creatures are contained. 10. The two receptacles of divine knowledge (*brâhmaṇa*) are secretly deposited, the one on this side, the other beyond, the surface of the sky. The Brahmachârin guards them by *tapas*. Wise, he appropriates that divine knowledge as his exclusive portion. . . . 16. The Brahmachârin is the Âchârya, the Brahmachârin is Prajâpati; Prajâpati shines (*vi râjati*); the shining (*Virâj*) became Indra, the powerful. 17. Through

¹ See Âśvalâyana's Gṛhya Sûtras, ed. Stenzler, pp. 12 ff., where the initiation of the Brahmachârin, or religious student, is described. Part of the ceremony is that he throws fuel (*samidh*) on the fire, which he invokes with texts. This ritual is probably alluded to in the hymn before us.

The Brahmachârin is also mentioned in R. V. x. 109, 5, where he is said to be one member of the gods (*sa devânâm bhavati ekam angam*).

² The words *brahma jyeshtham* appear here to denote divine knowledge. As employed in A. V. x. 7, 32 ff., and x. 8, 1, they appear to designate a personal being. See above.

self-restraint (*brahmacharyya*, i.e. the life of a *brahmachârin*) and *tapas* a king protects his dominions. Through self-restraint an Âchârya seeks after a Brahmachârin. 18. By self-restraint a damsel obtains a young man as her husband. By self-restraint an ox and a horse seek to gain fodder. 19. By self-restraint and *tapas* the gods destroyed death. By self-restraint Indra acquired heaven from [or, for] the gods. 20. Plants, whatever has been, whatever shall be, day and night, trees, the year, with the seasons, have been produced from the Brahmachârin. 21. Terrestrial and celestial beings, beasts both wild and tame, creatures without wings and winged, have been produced from the Brahmachârin. 22. All creatures which have sprung from Prajâpati have breath separately in themselves; all of these are preserved by divine knowledge (*brahma*), which is produced in the Brahmachârin. . . . 26. These things the Brahmachârin formed; on the surface of the water he stood performing *tapas*¹ in the sea."

The Taittirîya Brâhmaṇa (iii. 10, 11, 3) tells a story illustrative of the great virtue ascribed to brahmacharyya, or religious self-restraint: "Bharadvâja practised brahmacharyya during three lives. Indra, approaching him when he was lying decayed and old, said: 'Bharadvâja, if I should give thee a fourth life, what wilt thou do with it?' He answered, 'I will use it only to practise brahmacharyya.' He showed him three objects, as it were unknown, in the shape of mountains. From each of these he took a handful. He said, addressing him, 'Bharadvâja, these are the Vedas: the Vedas are infinite. This is what thou hast studied during these three lives. But other things have remained unstudied by thee. Now learn this (Agni Sâvitra). This is universal knowledge.' "

KÂMA.

We have already seen above, that in R. V. x. 129, 4, desire is said to have been the first movement that arose in the One after it had come into life through the power of fervour, or abstraction. This Kâma, or desire, not of sexual

¹ Compare A. V. x. 7, 38, quoted above.

enjoyment, but of good in general, is celebrated in the following curious hymn (A. V. ix. 2) as a great power, superior to all the gods; and is supplicated for deliverance from enemies. Desire, as the first step towards its own fulfilment, must be considered as here identified with successful desire, or with some deity regarded as the inspirer and accomplisher of the wishes of his votaries: ¹

“1. With oblations of butter I worship Kâma,² the mighty slayer of enemies. Do thou, when lauded, beat down my foes by thy great might. 2. The sleeplessness which is displeasing to my mind and eye, which harasses and does not delight me, that sleeplessness I let loose upon my enemy. Having praised Kâma, may I rend him. 3. Kâma, do thou, a fierce lord, let loose sleeplessness, misfortune, childlessness, homelessness, and want, upon him who wishes us evil. 4. Send them away, Kâma, drive them away: may they fall into misery, those who are my enemies. When they have been hurled into the nethermost darkness, do thou, Agni, burn up their dwellings. 5. That daughter of thine, Kâma, is named the Cow which sages call Vâch Virâj. By her drive away my

¹ In A. V. iii. 29, 7, some light is thrown upon the process by which Kâma came to be regarded as a deity. We there read: “Who hath given this, and to whom? Kâma has given it to Kâma (i.e. the inspirer, or fulfiller, of desire, has given it to desire). Kâma is the giver (i.e. the inspirer, or fulfiller, of desire); Kâma is the receiver. Kâma has entered into the ocean. Through Kâma I receive thee, Kâma, this is thine.” The allusion here made to Kâma entering the ocean recalls the fact that Agni is often said to be produced from or exist in the waters (R. V. i. 23, 23; x. 2, 7; x. 51, 3; x. 91, 6; A. V. i. 33, 1). And in A. V. iii. 21, 4, Kâma is distinctly identified with Agni: “The god (Agni), who is omnivorous, whom they call Kâma, whom they call the giver and the receiver, who is wise, strong, pre-eminent, unconquerable,” etc. In some parts of the hymn before us (A. V. ix. 2) the same identification of Kâma with Agni appears to be made. Thus in v. 1, Kâma, and in v. 8, Kâma and other gods, are said to be worshipped with *ghṛta* (butter), an oblation especially appropriate to Agni. In vv. 4 and 9, Agni is called upon to burn the dwellings of the worshipper's enemies, whom Kâma had just been besought to destroy. Again, in v. 25, the auspicious bodies, or manifestations (*tanvāḥ*) of Kâma are referred to just as those of Agni are in other hymns, (as R. V. x. 16, 4; A. V. xviii. 4, 10; comp. Vāj. S. xvi. 2). On the other hand, however, Agni is specified separately from Kâma in v. 6; and in v. 24, Kâma is represented as superior to Agni, as well as to Vâta, Sûrya, and Chandramas (the moon). In v. 9, Indra and Agni are mentioned along with Kâma, though the verb with which these gods are connected is in the dual. But although in these verses Agni and Kâma are distinguished from each other, Kâma may be there looked upon as a superior form of the other deity.

² In the Taitt. Br. ii. 8, 8, 8, Śraddhā, or faith, is said to be the mother of Kâma. This, however, the commentator explains as signifying merely that she is the means of obtaining all desired rewards, since no action takes place unless men have faith.

enemies. May breath, cattle, life forsake them. . . . 7. May all the gods be my defence; may all the gods attend upon this my invocation. 8. Ye [gods], of whom Kâma is the highest, accepting this oblation of butter, be joyful in this place, granting me deliverance from my enemies. 9. Indra, Agni, and Kâma, mounted on the same chariot, hurl ye down my foes; when they have fallen into the nethermost darkness, do thou, Agni, burn up their dwellings. 10. Kâma, slay my enemies; cast them down into thick (*lit.* blind) darkness. Let them all become destitute of power and vigour, and not live a single day. 11. Kâma has slain my enemies, has made for me a wide room and prosperity. May the four regions bow down to me and the six worlds bring fatness. 12 (=A. V. iii. 6, 7). Let them (my enemies) float downwards like a boat severed from its moorings. There is no return for those who have been put to flight by our arrows. . . . 16. With that triple and effectual protection of thine, O Kâma, that spell (*brahma*), which has been extended [in front of us as] armour, and made impenetrable, do thou drive away, etc. (as in v. 5). 17. Do thou, Kâma, drive my enemies far from this world by that [same weapon, or amulet] wherewith the gods repelled the Asuras, and Indra hurled the Dasyus into the nethermost darkness.¹ (V. 18 is nearly a repetition of v. 17). 19. Kâma was born the first. Him neither gods, nor Fathers, nor men have equalled. Thou art superior to these, and for ever great. To thee, Kâma, I offer reverence. 20. Wide as are the heaven and earth in extent; far as the waters have swept; far as Agni [has blazed];—thou art yet superior to these (as in v. 19). 21. Great as are the regions and the several intermediate regions, the celestial tracts, and the vistas of the sky,—thou art yet superior, etc. 22. As

¹ In A. V. viii. 6, 3, mention is made of a jewel or amulet, by which Indra slew Vṛtra, overcame the Asuras, and conquered heaven and earth, and the four regions." And in A. V. viii. 8, 5 ff. we are told of another instrument of offence belonging to Indra, in addition to the thunderbolt, arrows, and hook, described in the R. V. (see my former paper, p. 92), viz., a net: 5. "The air was his net; and the great regions the rods for extending the net. Enclosing within it the host of the Dasyus, Śakra overwhelmed it. 7. Great is the net of thee who art great, O heroic Indra! . . . within it enclosing them, Śakra slew a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand, a hundred millions of Dasyus, with his army."

many bees, bats, reptiles, *vaghas* (?), and tree-serpents as there are, thou art yet superior, etc. 23. Thou art superior to all that winks, or stands, superior to the sea, O Kâma, Manyu. Thou art superior, etc. 24. Even Vâta (the Wind) does not vie with Kâma, nor does Agni, nor Sûrya, nor Chandramas (the Moon). Thou art superior, etc. 25. With those auspicious and gracious forms of thine, O Kâma, through which that which thou choosest becomes true,—with them do thou enter into us; and send malevolent thoughts away somewhere else.”

A. V. xix. 52, is another hymn addressed to the same deity.

It is well known that Greek mythology connected Eros, the god of love, with the creation of the universe somewhat in the same way as Kâma is associated with it in R. V. x. 129, 4. Thus Plato says in the Symposium (sect. 6): “Eros neither had any parents, nor is he said by any unlearned man or by any poet to have had any. But Hesiod declares that chaos first arose, and ‘then the broad-bosomed earth, ever the firm abode of all things, and Eros.’ He says that after chaos these two things were produced, the earth and Eros. Now Parmenides speaks thus of the creation, ‘He devised Eros the first of all the gods.’ And Acusilaus also agrees with Hesiod. From so many quarters is Eros admitted to be one of the oldest deities.” (See the article Eros in Dr. Smith’s Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology, and the authorities there referred to).

In another hymn of the A. V. (iii. 25), Kâma, like the Eros of the Greeks and Cupid of the Latins, is described as the god of sexual love. The commencement of it is as follows: “1. May the disquieter disquiet thee. Do not rest upon thy bed. With the terrible arrow of Kâma I pierce thee in the heart. 2. May Kâma, having well directed the arrow which is winged with pain, barbed with longing, and has desire for its shaft, pierce thee in the heart. 3. With the well-aimed arrow of Kâma, which dries up the spleen, . . . I pierce thee in the heart.”¹

¹ This hymn is translated by Professor Weber in his *Indische Studien*, v. 224 ff., from whose version I have derived assistance.

KĀLA, OR TIME.

In the next two remarkable hymns we find an altogether new doctrine, as Time is there described as the source and ruler of all things:—

A. V. xix. 53 :¹ “1. Time carries [us] forward, a steed, with seven rays, a thousand eyes, undecaying, full of fecundity. On him intelligent sages mount ; his wheels are all the worlds. 2. Thus Time moves on seven wheels ; he has seven naves ; immortality is his axle. He is at present all these worlds. Time hastens onward, the first god. 3. A full jar is contained in Time. We behold him existing in many forms. He is all these worlds in the future. They call him Time in the highest heaven. 4. It is he who drew forth the worlds, and encircled them. Being the father, he became their son. There is no other power superior to him. 5. Time generated the sky and these earths. Set in motion by Time, the past and the future subsist. 6. Time created the earth ; by Time the sun burns ; through Time all beings [exist] ; through Time the eye sees. 7. Mind, breath, name, are embraced in Time. All these creatures rejoice when Time arrives. 8. In Time rigorous abstraction (*tapas*), in time the highest (*jyeshtham*), in Time divine knowledge (*brahma*) is comprehended. Time is lord of all things, he who was the father of Prajâpati. 9. That [universe] has been set in motion by him, produced by him, and is supported on him. Time, becoming divine energy (*brahma*), supports Parameshthî. 10. Time produced creatures ; Time in the beginning [formed] Prajâpati. The self-born² Kaśyapa sprang from Time, and from Time [sprang] rigorous abstraction (*tapas*).”

¹ A great deal is said about the potency of Kâla, or Time, in the Sânti-parva of the Mahâbhârata, vv. 8106, 8112, 8125 ff., 8139-8144, 8758, 9877 f., 10060.

² The word which I have rendered “self-born” is *svayambhûh*. This term must in certain cases be rendered by “self-existent,” as in Manu i. 6-11, where it is applied to the undeveloped primordial Deity, the creator of Brahmâ. In other places, however, Brahmâ himself, the derived creator, is called *svayambhûh*, as in M. Bh. Sântip. v. 7569, though he had previously (in v. 7530) been declared to have been born in a lotus sprung from the navel of Sankarshana, the first-born offspring (v. 7527) of Vishnu. The same epithet is applied to Brahmâ in the Bhâg. Pur. iii. 8, 15. But in fact, *Svayambhû* is well known to be one of the synonyms of Brahmâ, though that god is nowhere represented as an underived, self-existent being. This word must therefore be regarded as not necessarily meaning anything more than one who comes into existence in an extraordinary and supernatural manner.

A. V. x. 54. "1. From Time the waters were produced, together with divine knowledge (*brahma*), *tapas*, and the regions. Through Time the sun rises and again sets. 2. Through Time the wind blows [*lit.* purifies]; through Time the earth is vast. The great sky is embraced in time. 3. Through Time the hymn (*mantra*) formerly produced both the past and the future. From Time sprang the Rik verses. The Yajus was produced from time. 4. Through Time they created the sacrifice, an imperishable portion for the gods. On Time the Gandharvas and Apsarases, on Time the worlds are supported. 5, 6. Through Time this Angiras and Atharvan rule over the sky. Having through divine knowledge (*brahma*), conquered both this world, and the highest world, and the holy worlds, and the holy ordinances (*vidhrtih*), yea all worlds, Time moves onward as the supreme god."

Rohita is identified with Kâla, A. V. xiii. 2, 39.

The conception of Kâla in these hymns is one which, if taken in its unmodified shape, would have been esteemed heretical in later times.¹ Thus among the several forms of speculation which are mentioned at the commencement of the Śvetâśvatara Upanishad, for the purpose, no doubt, of being condemned as erroneous, is one which regards Kâla, or Time, as the origin of all things. The line in which these different systems are mentioned is as follows: *kâlah svabhâvo niyatir yadrçhâ bhûtâni yonih puruṣaḥ*. It is the verse referred to in the following note of Prof. Wilson in p. 19 of his Vishṇu Purāṇa (Dr. Hall's ed.): "The commentator on the Moksha Dharma (a part of the Śānti-parva of the M. Bh.) cites a passage from the Vedas, which he understands to allude to the different theories of the cause of creation (then follows the line just quoted); time, inherent nature, consequence of acts, self-will, elementary atoms, matter, and spirit, asserted severally by the astrologers, the Buddhists, the Mīmāṃsakas, the logicians, the Sāṅkhyas, and the Vedāntins."²

¹ The M. Bh. however, Anuśāsana-parva, vv. 51-56, makes Mṛtyu, or death, declare that all natures, all creatures, the world itself, all actions, cessations and changes, derive their essential character from Time, while the gods themselves, including Vishṇu, are created and destroyed by the same power (*kâla*).

² "Κρόνος was also," adds Prof. Wilson, "one of the first generated agents in creation, according to the Orphic theogony."

Manu (i. 24), declares Kâla (Time) to have been one of the things created by Brahmâ. But though not admitted as itself the origin of all things, Kâla is nevertheless recognised by the author of the Vishṇu Purâṇa as one of the forms of the supreme Being. See pp. 18, 19, and 25, of Dr. Hall's edition of Wilson's Vishṇu Purâṇa, and the note in p. 19 already referred to, where Prof. Wilson says, "Time is not usually enumerated in the Purâṇas as an element of the 'first cause;' but the Padma Purâṇa and the Bhâgavata agree with the Vishṇu in including it. It appears to have been regarded, at an earlier date, as an independent cause." See the Bhâg. Pur. iii. 5, 34-37; iii. 8, 11 ff.; iii. 10, 10-13; iii. 11, 1 ff.; iii. 12, 1 ff. We thus see the authors of the Purâṇas interweaving with their own cosmogonies all the older elements of speculation which they discovered in the Vedas; and by blending heretical materials with others which were more orthodox, contriving to neutralize the heterodoxy of the former.

A few general observations are suggested by a consideration of the principal passages which have been quoted in this paper.

I. The conceptions of the godhead expressed in these texts are of a wavering and undetermined character. It is clear that the authors had not attained to a distinct and logical comprehension of the characteristics which they ascribed to the objects of their adoration. On the one hand, the attributes of infinity, omnipotence, omnipresence, are ascribed to different beings, or to the same being under the various names of Purusha, Skambha, Brahma, Hiranyagarbha, etc. (R. V. x. 90, 1 ff.; x. 121, 1 ff. A. V. x. 7, 10, 13, 31-33; x. 8, 1). And yet in other places these same qualities are represented as subject to limitations, and these divine beings themselves are said to expand by food, to be produced from other beings (as Purusha from Virâj), to be sacrificed, to be produced from *tapas*, or to perform *tapas* (R. V. x. 90, 2, 4, 7. A. V. x. 2, 12 ff., 26; x. 7, 31, 36, 38).

II. In these passages divine power is variously conceived, sometimes as the property of one supreme person, as Purusha, Skambha, etc.; while in other places it is attached (1) to

some abstraction as Kâma (Desire), Kâla (Time), or (2) to some personification of energies residing in living beings, as Prâṇa (Life or Breath), or (3) of the materials (*uchhishta*) or the implements (*juhû*, *upabhr̥t*, etc.) of sacrifice, or is ascribed (4) to the vehicles of adoration, to hymns and metres, such as the Virâj, which is said (A. V. viii. 10, 1) to have been identical with the world, or (5) to the guardian of sacred science, and future minister of religious rites, the Brahmachârin. It need occasion no surprise that the young priest should be regarded as invested with such transcendent attributes, when even the sacrifices which he was being trained to celebrate, the hymns and metres in which he invoked the gods, and the very sacrificial vessels he handled were conceived to possess a supernatural potency.

It is difficult to seize the different elements of thought and feeling which may have concurred to give birth to this hazy congeries of ideas, in which the real centre of divine power is obscured, while a multitude of inferior objects are magnified into unreal proportions, and invested with a fictitious sanctity. But these extraordinary representations reveal to us in the Indians of the Vedic age a conception of the universe which was at once (a) mystical or sacramental, (b) polytheistic, and (c) pantheistic; (a) everything connected with religious rites being imagined to have in it a spiritual as well as a physical potency; (b) all parts of nature being separately regarded as invested with divine power; and yet (c) as constituent parts of one great whole.

I shall add some remarks on the relation of the Vedic polytheism to the earlier religion, which we may suppose to have prevailed among the primitive Aryans.

M. Adolphe Pictet, in his work "*Les Origines Indo-Européennes*," vol. ii., has lately discussed the question whether that religion was from the first a polytheism, embracing all the principal powers of nature, as comparative philology shows it to have been about the time of the separation of the different branches of the race, or whether it had been originally monotheistic.

He thinks that as a polytheism such as we find existing at the

dawn of Aryan history could only have been developed gradually, it must have been preceded by a more simple system (p. 651). This inference he supports by the remark that the names of most of the gods in the Aryan mythology correspond with those of the great objects of nature, designated by some of their most characteristic attributes. But as these natural objects have derived their appellations from their physical qualities alone, they could not originally, at the time when they received their names, have been regarded as divinities. If nature-worship had prevailed among the Aryans from the commencement, some trace of this fact must have been preserved in their language, which, however, manifests nothing but the most complete realism as regards the epithets applied to natural phenomena. As it thus appears that the great objects of nature could not have been regarded as divine at the time when the language was formed, the Aryans could not originally have been polytheists. It is not, however, to be imagined that a race so highly gifted should even at this early period have been destitute of all religious sentiments and beliefs. But if not polytheists, they must have been monotheists. This conclusion M. Pictet corroborates by referring to the most ancient names of the Deity, such as *Deva*, etc., which he regards as in their origin unconnected with natural objects or phenomena. This primitive monotheism of the Aryans he supposes to have arisen from the necessity which they instinctively felt to refer the production of the world to one first Cause, whom they would naturally place not on earth, their own familiar abode, but in the mysterious and inaccessible heavens. This supreme Being would thus be called *Deva*, or the celestial; and as the heaven which he inhabited was one, so would He himself also be conceived of as an Unity. This primitive monotheism, however, could not have been very clearly defined, but must have remained a vague, obscure, and rudimentary conception. It would not otherwise be easy to understand how it should have degenerated into polytheism. But as the idea of God remained veiled in this mysterious obscurity, it became necessary for the worshippers to seek for some divinities intermediate between Him and themselves, through whom they might approach Him; and to explain the multiplicity of phenomena (which they were not as yet sufficiently enlightened to derive from the uniform action of one central will), by regarding them as regulated by a plurality of divine agents. At first, however, the polytheism would be simple, and the subordinate deities composing the pantheon would be considered as the ministers of the one supreme Deity. Such may have been the state of things when the different branches of the Aryans separated. The polytheistic idea, however, when once

it had begun to work, would tend constantly to multiply the number of divinities, as we see it has already done in the Vedic age. So great, however, is the power exercised over the human mind by the principle of unity, that the idea of one supreme Being, though obscured, is never lost, but is always breaking forth like a light from the clouds in which it is enveloped. The traces of monotheism which are found in the Rig Veda may perhaps, M. Pictet thinks, be reminiscences of the more ancient religion described above, though the pantheistic ideas observable, whether in the myths or in the speculations of the same hymn-collection, are the results of a new tendency peculiar to the Indian intellect. While, however, the Indians thus eventually fell into pantheism, the Iranians had at an earlier period embraced a reformed system, not dualistic, as is commonly supposed, but monotheistic; and the religious separation which then took place between the two tribes may have had its origin in a reaction of one section of the nation against the growing polytheism, and a recurrence to the principles of the old monotheism, of which the remembrance had not been altogether lost (pp. 708 ff.).

I scarcely think that M. Pictet's theory regarding the character of the primitive religion of the Aryans is borne out by the arguments which he adduces in its support.

1. It may be quite true that the complicated polytheism which we find in the hymns of the Rig Veda, or even the narrower system which we may suppose to have existed at the separation of the Indian and Iranian tribes, could only have been the slowly-developed product of many centuries; but this does not prove that a simpler form of nature-worship, embracing a plurality of gods, might not have existed among the ancestors of these tribes from the beginning of their history. I can see no reason for the conclusion that monotheism must necessarily have been the starting-point of the system.

2. Again, the fact that the great objects of external nature, the sky, the earth, the sun, were designated in the oldest Aryan language by names descriptive merely of their physical characteristics, supposing it to be admitted, would not suffice to establish M. Pictet's inference that no divine character was attributed to those objects at the time when they were named. Though we suppose that the sky (*dyu* or *div*) derived its appellation from its luminous appearance, the earth (*pr̥thivī* or *māhī*) from its breadth or vastness, and the sun (*sūrya* or

savitṛ?) from its brightness and fecundating power, it does not follow that, though familiarly called by these names, they were not at the same time regarded as living powers, invested with divine attributes. How strong soever may have been the religious feelings of the primitive Aryans, however lively their sense of the supernatural, and however forcibly we may therefore imagine them to have been impelled to deify the grand natural objects by which they were surrounded and overawed, it is obvious that the physical impressions made by those objects on their senses would be yet more powerful (in proportion as they were more frequent and more obtrusive); and that consequently the sky, earth, sun, etc., even though regarded as deities, would naturally be called by names denoting their external characteristics, rather than by other appellations descriptive of the divine attributes they were supposed to possess.

If an etymological argument of this sort were to be considered as settling the question, we might in like manner insist that because the word *Varuṇa* means (or is supposed to mean) the enveloper, it must therefore in the beginning have designated the sky alone (as the corresponding word *ὐρανός* afterwards did in Greek), and could not have been the name of a divinity. But this conclusion, however it may appear to be confirmed by Greek usage, receives no support from the most ancient Indian literature, in which the word is never employed for sky.

In such inquiries, moreover, it is unsafe to build too much on etymologies, many of which are in themselves extremely uncertain.

On the subject before us I will quote some remarks by two recent French writers. The first of these is M. Edmond Scherer, an acute theologian and accomplished critic, who, in a review of M. Pictet's work, thus expresses himself:—

“M. Pictet distinguishes in the religion of the Aryans two elements contrary in appearance, (1) a monotheism pure and elevated, which conceives the Deity as a being distinct from the world; (2) a polytheism resulting from the personification of natural objects, and which, by attributing life to these objects, creates an entire mytho-

logy. This apparent contradiction M. Pictet explains by a development. He thinks the human mind must have proceeded from the simple to the complex, from unity to diversity, that polytheism has arisen from the need of seeking other beings intermediate between the supreme Being and man, and that it has thus been able to establish itself without destroying altogether the first or monotheistic idea. We are thus brought back to the problem with which M. Renan has dealt in his studies on the Semitic races, although with this difference, that M. Renan opposed the Semite, as the genius of monotheism, to the Arya, as the genius of polytheism. Perhaps, in both cases, the difficulty arises from regarding as absolute an opposition which is merely relative. There never has been, and doubtless there never will be, either a pure polytheism or a pure monotheism. Thus religions can only be defined or characterised by the predominance of the one of the two elements over the other; and their history consists less in successive phases, in their passing from one form to the other, than in the coexistence and the struggle of two principles answering to two requirements of the human soul which are equally imperious."—(*Mélanges d'Histoire Religieuse*, pp. 35 f.)

On the same subject another distinguished theologian of the critical school, M. Albert Réville, writes as follows in the "*Revue des Deux Mondes*" (Feb. 1864, p. 721 f.):—

"If we had before us positive facts attesting that the march of the human mind has been such (as M. Pictet describes), we should only have to surrender, and admit, contrary to all probability *à priori*, that man while still sunk in the most profound ignorance was better able to grasp religious truths than he was at the epoch when he began to reflect and to know. But have these facts any existence? So long as none can be alleged which have a demonstrative force, ought we not to hold to the hypothesis, confirmed by so many analogies, of a gradual elevation of religion (as of all the other spheres in which the human mind moves), from the simplest elements to the most sublime conceptions?" Again: "It is evident, and fully admitted by M. Pictet, that our ancestors were polytheists before their separation; but at that period this polytheism was not of yesterday. It had already had a history; and it is a matter of course that in the historical development of a polytheistic religion, there must have been, as it were, guesses, germs, presentiments of monotheism. From the moment when a plurality of divine beings is recognised, a community of divine nature between them all is also admitted. In this way arise such epithets as 'luminous,' 'ador-

able,' 'living,' 'mighty,' which in course of time become substantives like our word 'Dieu' itself. The sky, personified, and become an object of adoration, speedily usurps the characteristics of a supreme Deity, elevated above all others, and master of an irresistible weapon, the thunderbolt. Thus in most mythologies the sky is what it is in that of the Greeks, the Jupiter, the sovereign father of gods and men. In short, it is clear that the human mind, in proportion as it observes and reflects, rises more and more towards monotheism, in obedience to that imperious law, hidden in the depths of its being, which leads it to the logical pursuit of unity. But this movement is very slow, greatly retarded by the force of tradition and habit, and we ought not to place at the beginning that which can only be found at the very end of the process."

I shall conclude with an extract from Professor R. Roth's Essay on the "Highest gods of the Aryan races," (Journal of the German Oriental Society, vi. 76 f.), in which that able writer, while holding that the religion of those tribes in its earlier stages contained a more spiritual element which was eventually preserved in a modified form by the Zoroastrian creed, recognizes, as also embraced in that elder religion, a system of nature-worship which afterwards became the most prominent element in the Indian mythology. We must, therefore, regard Roth also as opposed to M. Pictet's theory of a primitive monotheism. A part of this passage has been already given in my former paper, pp. 101 f.; but it is necessary that that portion should be repeated here with a view to the proper comprehension of the remainder.

"But that which still further enhances the interest of this inquiry, and is of especial importance in reference to the primitive period, is the peculiar character attaching to the conception of the Âdityas. The names of these deities (with a certain reservation in regard to that of Varuṇa) embrace no ideas drawn from physical nature, but express certain relations of moral and social life. Mitra, 'the friend,' Aryanān, Bhaga, Anṣa, the gods who 'favour,' 'bless,' 'sympathize,' and Dakṣha, 'the intelligent,' are pure spirits, in whom the noblest relations of human intercourse are mirrored, and so appear (*i.e.* the relations appear) as emanations of the divine life, and as objects of immediate divine protection. But if the earliest Aryan antiquity thus beheld in its highest gods not the most prominent manifestations of physical nature, but the conditions

of moral life and society, and consequently esteemed these moral blessings more highly than anything connected with the wants and enjoyments of sense, we must ascribe to that age a high spiritual capacity, whatever may have been its deficiency in the constituents of external civilization.

"These considerations throw some light on the principles and character of the two Aryan religions which have sprung from one and the same source. The religion of Ormuzd holds fast, while it shapes after its own peculiar fashion, the supersensuous element called into existence by the higher order of gods belonging to the common ancient creed, and eventually rejects almost entirely the *deities representing the powers of nature, which*, as well as those of the former class, *it had inherited from the earliest period.* The Vedic creed, on the other hand, is preparing to concede the highest rank to the latter class (the representatives of the powers of nature), to transfer to them an ever increasing honour and dignity, to draw down the divine life into nature, and bring it ever closer to man. The proof of this is especially to be found in the myth regarding Indra, a god who, in the earlier period of Aryan religious history, either had no existence, or was confined to an obscure province. The Zend legend attributes to another deity the function which forms the essence of the later myth regarding Indra. This god Trita, however, disappears from the Indian mythology in the course of the Vedic age, and Indra succeeds him. And not only so, but towards the end of this period Indra begins to push aside even Varuṇa himself, the highest god of the ancient creed, from the position which is shown, partly by historical testimonies, and partly by the very conception of his character, to belong to him, and becomes, if not the supreme god, at least the national god, whom his encomiasts strive to elevate above the ancient Varuṇa."

"Thus the course of the movement is that an ancient supreme deity, originally common to the Aryans (*i.e.* the ancestors of the Persians and Indians), and perhaps also to the entire Indo-Germanic race, Varuṇa-Ormuzd-Uranos, is thrown back into the darkness, and in his room Indra, a peculiarly Indian, and a national, god, is introduced. With Varuṇa disappears at the same time the old character of the people, while with Indra a new character, foreign to the primitive Indo-Germanic nature, is in an equal measure brought in. Viewed in its internal essence, this modification in the religious conceptions of the Aryans consists in an ever increasing tendency to attenuate the supersensuous, mysterious side of their creed, till at length the gods who were originally the highest and the most spiritual, have become unmeaning representatives of

nature, and Varuṇa is nothing more than the ruler of the sea, while the Âdityas are the mere regents of the sun's course.

"When the higher and more spiritual elements in the Indian creed had thus become so greatly reduced, it was inevitable that a reaction should ensue," etc.

Although, towards the close of the preceding passage, Professor Roth speaks of an "ancient supreme deity" (*ein alter . . . oberster Gott*) as "originally common to the Aryans," it is evident from the entire context that he does not regard this deity as their only object of adoration, since he recognizes the existence of a plurality of gods. In the previous part of his dissertation, too, Roth speaks (p. 70) of the close relation in the Vedic era between Varuṇa and another god, Mitra,—a relation which he holds to have subsisted from an earlier period. And at p. 74, he refers to the activity and dignity of Varuṇa being shared by the other Âdityas, though no separate provinces can be assigned to them, while he is the first of the number, and represents in himself the powers of the whole class. If this description apply to the ancient Aryan religion, it cannot be properly said to have been monotheistic, though one deity may have been more prominent than the rest.

I have been favoured with the following note on the subject of A. V., x. 7, by Professor Goldstücker, whom I consulted as to the sense of verse 21, and the idea conveyed by the word Skambha, which forms the subject of the hymn :—

"The sense of *skambha* is in my opinion the same as that given in your Original Sanskrit Texts, vol. iv., pp. 17, 18—*skambh* and *stambh* being merely phonetic varieties of the same dhātu—and *skambha*, therefore, the same as *stambha*. It is the 'fulcrum,' and in the Atharvaveda hymns, x. 7 and 8, seems to mean the fulcrum of the whole world, in all its physical, religious, and other aspects. The object of the hymn being to inquire what this fulcrum is, from the answer given to the various questions it seems to follow that it is there imagined to be the primitive Deity or the *primitive* Veda, the word *brahman* in the neuter implying both. From this *primitive* Veda, not visibly but yet really (*sat*) existing, not only all the gods, worlds, religious rites, etc. (vv. 1, 2, ff, 19 ff.) were derived, but also the existing three Vedas (v. 14) and

the Atharvan were 'fashioned' (v. 20). This *skambha* is, therefore, also *jyeshtham brahma* (vv. 24, 32, 33, 34, 36.—8. 1), and it has a corresponding preæval *jyeshtham brâhmaṇam* (v. 17). Hence, while he who knows the (existing) Veda, has also a knowledge of Brahmâ,—he who knows Brahmâ and also Prajâpati, and (hence) possesses a knowledge of the preæval Brâhmaṇa portion (of the preæval Veda), may *infer* (*anu*) from such knowledge a knowledge of the Skambha or that of the preæval Veda itself (v. 17). This preæval Veda is the 'treasure' which is kept by the gods only (v. 23); hence the Atharvaveda priest (brahmâ) who has a knowledge of those god-guardians of the preæval Veda, has *the* knowledge (or, he who has such a knowledge, is a (true) Atharvaveda priest; v. 24). From this, then, it would likewise follow that the existing three Vedas are merely portions of the preæval Veda, whence they were derived, or to adhere to the metaphor, branches of that tree-fulcrum (compare v. 38); and, moreover, that while *skambha* is *the* reality, these branch-vedas are not *the* reality, though those who do not understand the Skambha, may take them for such (v. 21). 'Some people think that the *existing* branch (*i.e.* the existing Vedas—compare v. 20) which is not *the* reality (*asat*) is as it were (*iva*) the highest (*paramam*) Veda; on the other hand, those (people) inferior (to the former), who believe that it is *the* reality (*sat*), worship thy branch (*i.e.* those later Vedas).' Here the word *iva*, in my opinion, implies that the *jandâ* of the first half verse have still a doubt, and therefore do not identify both the preæval and the existing Vedas; whereas those people introduced with *uto* (*uta-u*) are more ignorant in assuming for certain such an identity, and therefore proceed to a practical worship of those Vedas."

So far Professor Goldstücker.

The words *vetaso hiranyayah* which occur in v. 41 of the hymn under consideration (A. V. x. 7) are also found in R. V. iv. 58, 5: "I behold the streams of butter (*ghṛta*); in the midst of them is the golden reed (*hiranyayo vetasah*)," which the commentator interprets as meaning *ap-sambhavo 'gnir vaidyutah*, the "fire of the lightning produced in the aerial waters."

With R. V. i. 164, 46, quoted at the beginning of the preceding paper, compare R. V. x. 114, 5: *suparnam viprah kavayo vachobhir ekam santam bahudhâ kalpayanti*. |